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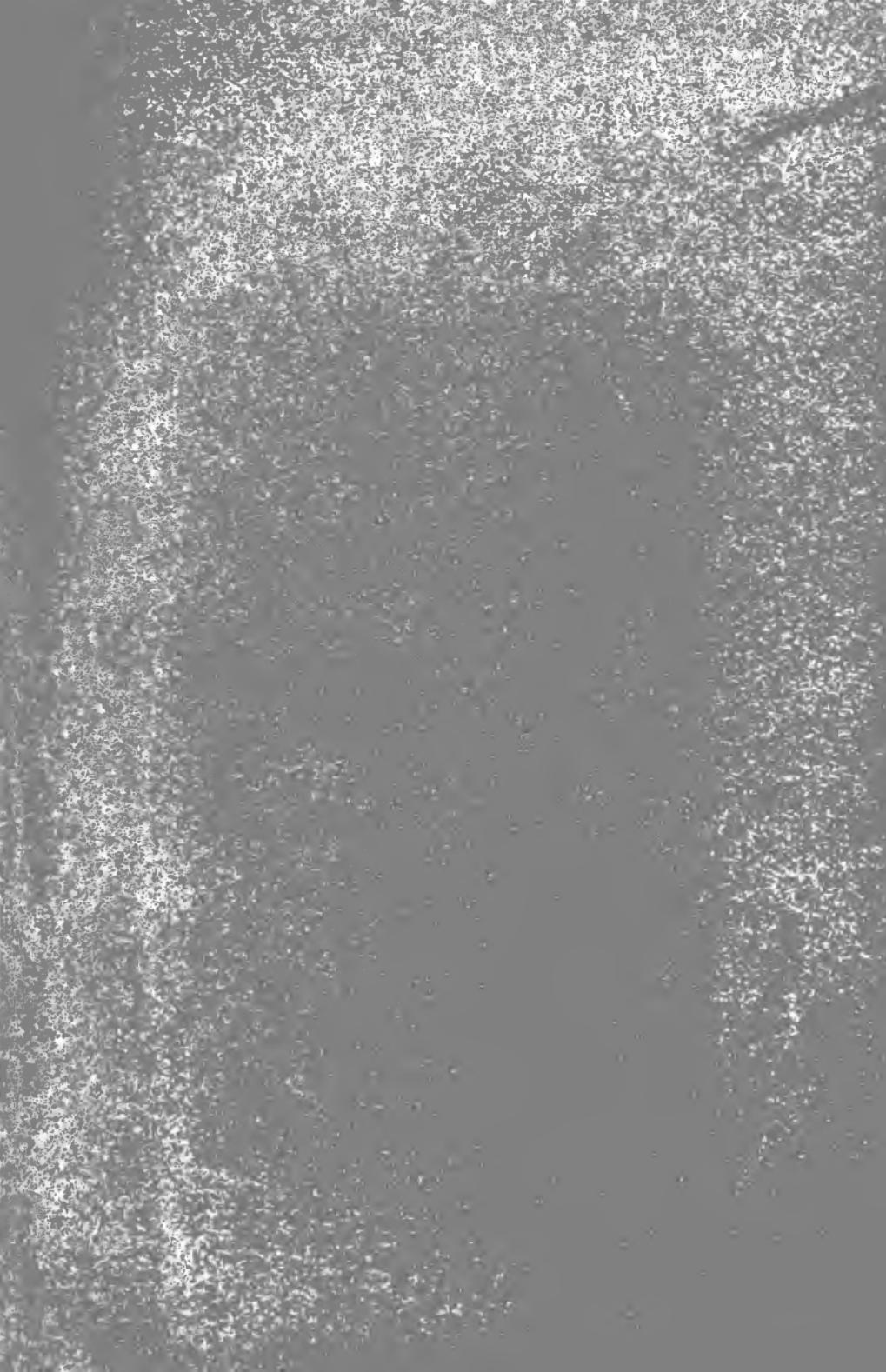
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to  
my dear Sister  
Amey  
With love & regards from

Feb, 1860.

MacR.

## INDIAN ECHOES

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# INDIAN ECHOES

BY

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"In a Dâk Bungalow"

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## DIES AMORIS

### TO MY WIFE

One day there flushed a dawn for me  
That held within its hours  
A wonder deeper than the sea  
And sweeter than the flowers;  
I little knew—for I was blind  
To all the glory breaking—  
How Love upon my threshold shined,  
To greet me on awaking.

But so it was: and half in awe  
And half in shy misgiving,  
The Angel of my heart I saw,  
A form amid the living;  
And yet were mine the pen to hold  
Of Love's surpassing sweetness,  
The story still were never told  
In all its dear completeness.

For Silence, like a naiad, haunts  
The springs of Love's recesses,  
And Love cares less for noisy vaunts  
Than passionate caresses:  
The glanee of spiritual light,  
The fine profound cognition  
Which folds as with a glory bright  
Two souls in one fruition!

Oh! speech in Love, what little worth  
The subtlest thoughts and dearest!  
The deepest joys of sky and earth  
Are nameless when the clearest!  
So while to lips of Love shall spring  
An utterance maimed and broken,  
Around the inmost heart shall cling  
The thought supreme—unspoken.

*INDIAN ECHOES*

And so with Love: its virgin sense  
    Of beauty scorns precision,  
We deem not how, or why, or whence  
    Breaks full the precious vision;  
But all transformed we learn to know,  
    With mystic sense of seeing,  
The sacred fire, the inner glow,  
    And highest law of being.

Yet we knew tears, ah! many tears,  
    Like rain amid our wooing,  
And baleful tempests through the years  
    Grew black for our undoing;  
But Love more strong than wave or tide  
    Or seas that overbore us,  
Hath brought us to a haven wide  
    With rippling calm before us.

So take this Book: this little Book  
    Whereto such thoughts are clinging  
That when you read it you may look  
    Beyond my wayward singing  
To all the raptures we have known,  
    Our tears, our joy, our jesting,  
With Love's great Peace in ever' tone  
    For Evensong and resting

## PREFATORY NOTE

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The poems contained in this volume have appeared, at various times, in *The Pioneer*; *The Times of India*; *The Madras Mail*; *The Civil and Military Gazette*; and one, "Howrah Bridge", first saw the light in *Capital*. To the editors of these various Anglo-Indian newspapers I beg leave to tender my thanks for their courteous permission to republish.

The majority of the poems, I may add, have never hitherto appeared in book form; though four or five military ballads were included some few years ago in a little volume, *Soldierin'*, published by The Indian Textile Journal Company, Limited, of Bombay. Three of these were republished by permission in "Patriotic Song" (Messrs. C. Arthur Pearson, Limited) in, I think, 1902.



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# INDIAN ECHOES

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## The Last Thoughts of MacAlpin

These are the thoughts of MacAlpin, late Famine  
official and—slave,

Who lay in his tent by the *nullah* and groaned on the  
brink of the grave,

While the dreams of his years broke around him like  
the foam that ebbs out on the tide,

As he wrestled for Life in the shadows, and battled  
with Death till he died,—

The thoughts that welled up from a spirit tried hard in  
a perilous time.

And lo! I have essayed to utter their meaning and  
rhythm in rime.

A rime of the East and its pathos—a rime of the  
drought and its dread,

A rime of the West and its mission—a rime of the  
living and dead.

A rime of a pitiless struggle—a rime of the wreath and  
the crown.

These, then, are the thoughts of MacAlpin, and thus  
have I written them down:—

“Oh! bitter the fruit I have taken—and ashes the fire  
of my youth—  
And bitter the Lie of existence that spake in the lan-  
guage of Truth!  
For *this* have I fought through the famine? This turn  
of my face to the wall?  
Have I dammed up the tide of starvation to die in the  
midst of it all?  
In the midst of Relief and Statistics where the Gospel  
of something to eat  
Was preached to the joy of the *bunniah* and flung with  
the rice and the wheat  
To the man and the child and the woman, at the eve  
and the noon and the morn,  
And now—shall the blessing escape me, as though I  
had never been born?  
The blessing inwoven with Labour, though poured on a  
desolate land,  
The Solace that comes to the worker, and nothing may  
pluck from his hand:  
What worth were my hope and my knowledge, the  
knowledge that kept me above  
The dreariness, loathing, and longing by the thought  
of the creatures I love?  
My knowledge but mocks and instructs me how others  
the lesson must learn  
That man may go forth to his labour, and only in spirit  
return.  
And Hope was the empty reflection of self in Life’s  
mystical glass  
Wherein, never guessing its meaning, we gaze and we  
dream till we pass

Away from the earth and its virtue—where Honour  
upraiseth his crest  
O'er the riband that measures his merit and the Order  
—brand new on the breast!  
Where good is—no good—in the abstract; worth  
scarcely the trouble to claim  
Unless it's in type and gazetted—tacked on to a man  
and his name!  
When the band of our fellowship wearies—except as  
a standard to show  
How near we have climbed to the heavens—how far  
lies our brother below!  
Can we say how the meed is apportioned? Need we  
seek for a final reply  
To the Life which in infinite phases sweeps up to an  
infinite sky:  
Where Eternity lives in the Present and the Present  
flows tirelessly fast  
To some Future that marks a beginning, and closes  
the gate of the Past?  
Can we know how the riddle is answered? In the  
freedom of will or—restraint?  
In the clay that drops sheer from the gallows—or the  
canonized soul of the saint?  
Can we estimate—we, of our weakness—all the work-  
ing of Nature and God  
In the harvest that died in the sowing? In the cry that  
went up from the sod?  
In the blood that was spilt in the battle? In the ship  
that went down in the deep?  
In the life ever rousing from slumber, or the life ever  
sinking to sleep?

In the kine that made food for the vulture? In the plow that was bartered for bread?

In the hate in the eyes of the living? In the rest on the face of the dead?

We catch but a glimpse of the Giver, we gauge not a tithe of our gains,

Though we map out the stars of the Heaven and measure the fall of our rains.

And how shall this mortal MacAlpin, this thing of the air and the earth,

Judge the Lord in His path of salvation while passing from birth unto birth?

I can hear, as I lie in my weakness, the clink of the iron and steel,

The ring of the stone and the hammer, the sound of the spade and the wheel;

I can see the bare feet on the earthworks, the bodies that bend in the glare,

And I know, by the spirit within me, my peace at the last, lieth *there!*

In the road we have cut through the jungle, in the metal that's measured and screened,

In the bund we have built for the river, in the tank we have deepened and cleaned.

And if Parker should come from the station, or Henderson ride from the kirk,

I'd still say, life's true benediction, by the blessing of God, was its work!

It must be! The thought of my children, the love and the faith of my wife

But torture my questioning pity as maddening riddles of life:

I follow them into the future, and helplessly stumble  
and gaze

Mid the mists that enwrap them for ever, and blot out  
the path of my days.

But *here*—I can speak with my Conscience—not fearing,  
but frankly and plain:

And the answer comes back to my comfort as frankly  
again and again.

Not *I*; but the virtue within me, the spark that was  
shrined in the clay.

Not *mine*—but the gift of the Giver who giveth and taketh away

The boon of the brain and the body, the life of the heart  
and the soul,

This one wayward atom of manhood swayed on to an  
ultimate goal.

And although at the end of the struggle I'm only Mac-  
Alpin the dead,

With the next man as good as gazetted to rule and to  
reign in my stead;

While the tears that be human are with me, while Faith  
and my reason contend

For the hope of a man and a Christian, the truth of a  
world without end,

I feel that the Life everlasting is *here*—as the Light in  
the ray,

As a drop is a part of the ocean, and a pulse-beat the  
part of a day;

That as all things are fruit of their causes, and as  
Nature can't trifle or lie,

Then it's clear there was *bound* to be famine, and I've  
worked my hardest to die,

Not knowing—but there lies the logic—!” And just  
as he got to this strain,  
MacAlpin dropped into a stupor and never awakened  
again!

## A Song of Empire

Thou art Mother, fair Britain, of heroes, and our fathers  
long gathered to rest

Were the sons of the valour that bled thee, and fed thee,  
the strongest and best,

With the Freedom of Southland and Northland, and the  
life of the East and the West!

Yea, thy valour swept on with the Angles, and flashed  
from the Eagles of Rome;

It sprang from the capes and the mountains, the tides  
washed it up on their foam

For a heritage meet of thy children, for the law of their  
hearth and their home.

But the shout of thy soldiers triumphant, and thy banners  
blood-red in the breeze,

With thy seamen whose mission of empire struck deeper  
and stronger than these,

Were less than the dust of thy legions, and less than the  
foam on the seas,

If behind them, beneath them, around them, yea, whether  
they sailed or they trod

In the blood and the thunder of battle, by the path of  
the sea or the sod,

Lay not ever the strength of the Giver, and the bright-  
ness and Spirit of God.

Was the valour of them or their virtue? Did they  
choose them the time and the place?  
Did they say to the North-wind: "These islands shall  
cradle the seed of our race"?  
Did they take of the Earth and the Water, and breathe  
out the soul of their grace

Till the galleons of Spain fled before them, till Trafalgar  
was part of their boast,  
From the depths of the Kuriles far Eastward to the isles  
of the West and its coast,  
And the world fiery-ringed bore them witness of standard  
and treaty and host?

Hear the voices of men and of angels from the land and  
the sea and the spheres!  
Rich are they with the song of the Present, deep are  
they with the note of the years  
Fed with deeds of thy past generations and their wor-  
ship and laughter and tears.

Oh! Ruler and Mother of Nations, there be victories yet  
to be won,  
In the battle that rageth unceasing 'twixt the rise and  
the set of the sun,  
While the shuttle of Time through the ages slips fast as  
thy glories are spun,  
Not only of slaughter and pillage, or of provinces brought  
to thy hands,  
Or of argosies crammed with the riches of uttermost  
waters and lands,  
But a texture of greatness inwoven of stronger and  
lovelier strands.

In thy cities still wander the wretched—yea, even the poor as of old,  
Life and Luxury, Power and Patronage, Pleasure and worship of gold,  
And the flesh of the Worker is bartered, and the virtue of Woman is sold!

Yet, the light of a high inspiration hath led thee to strength and to rule,  
Nor ever the prestige of virtue goeth down at the sneer of the fool.  
Less and less, spite of faction and party, is the statesman a tout or a tool

For the passions of madness and bluster in the service of license and lust;  
More and more groweth Mercy with Justice, and wider the realm of the just;  
Less and less are the robes of thy Glory befouled with the mire and the dust.

If a Province fall into thy keeping, thy freedom sweeps in with thy stride;  
Thy conquest enslaveth no nations, though it breaketh in pieces the pride  
Of the tyrant, and bringeth majestic on the sweep of an inflowing tide

Thy Laws, and thy Justice and Honour, the gold with the mire and the clay,  
The wheat with the chaff to be winnowed, and the false with the true, and the Day  
With the Night, and the Wrong with the Right, and the Good with the Evil alway.

And the strength and its weakness, the pride with its  
meekness, the tempest of wrath  
With the pity and feeling, the wound and its healing,  
the Light in the path,  
And the Season of sowing and growing, and the gathering-  
ing in of the math.

So thy strength is thy Justice, aye fearless and peerless,  
though many may rail,  
Though the balance be often unsteady, and unequal the  
weight in the scale.  
Yet the Justice is there, and the effort to dare—though  
the effort may fail.

And thy strength is the strength of the purest the while  
thou endurest to reign  
O'er the Land and the Sea, by the Laws of the Free—  
not the blood of the slain  
Are thy soldiers and seamen thy freemen and the sires  
of thy freemen again.  
And thy strength is the strength race-begotten, the blood  
strength, the soul strength, the bond  
Of thy Colonies owning thy Motherhood, welded in  
brotherhood, fond  
With a pride that is purer than loyalty, high as the  
stars and beyond.

And thy strength is the virtue of woman and the love  
that is human and wise,  
And thy peasantry loving the homeland, its clouds and  
its fields and its skies,  
And a kinship of brotherhood scorning all meanness,  
oppression, and lies.

And thy strength is the song of thy poets, heart-stirring,  
soul-swelling, and sung  
By the rich and the poor in their life-work, their joys  
and their sorrows among,  
And the thought that is soul of thy language, and the  
speech that is salt of thy tongue.

So thy strength is in sons and in daughters, not in land,  
or in waters, or gold,  
Nor in spoil of the battle, nor cattle, nor in things that  
be bartered and sold,  
But in Truth and in Valour and Honour, and God's love  
and man's manifold.

For there lieth around thee, within thee, so long as  
thou holdest the Right,  
All the Justice Eternal of Heaven—the Wisdom Super-  
nal—the Light  
Of all Light which is Truth Everlasting, and the strength  
which is God—and His might!

## The Stricken Field

*Protector of the Poor! ah, me!*

*What bitter sorrow through the phrase  
Wails forth while bends the supple knee  
And turns the wistful gaze!*

*Protector of the Poor! through days*

*That pitiless go creeping by,  
With hunger in the noon tide blaze,  
And Hunger in the starry sky.*

*Protector of the Poor! Go to,*

*Thou fool that reasonest thus and thus,  
With benediction wailing through  
Thy plainings multitudinous!  
We pray, and write, and work, and fuss,  
We fight against the host of God,  
While deep in scorn of thee—and us  
The harvest sickens in the sod.*

Unforgotten through noon of the famine is the spring-tide promise of Earth,

When the Dawn, mist-girt in the valleys, crept soft through the twilight air;

Kissing the nursling grain alive with its delicate birth,  
While the green leaf leapt to the Day—the young leaf tender and fair.

It is I—a spirit of Earth, inwoven with loam and with clod—

A spirit of Life and its working—a spirit of strength and its bliss:

It is I who have listened to sorrow and the vows to an  
angry god,

It is I—the Voice of the Field, who sing to thee  
—even this!

Age after age were they born, these mortal children of  
men;

Dust of the Earth, thou sayest—yea, dust that  
ploughed and span;

But they fared them forth in the morning to the ways  
of their labour then,

With a song that was born of Plenty, and the Hope  
that is good for man.

Innocent Childhood, and Youth; Maidenhood, Mother-  
hood, Sire—

I have seen them all, and I know them—this Dust  
that is flesh and bone,

With its tears, and its toil, and its slumber; its joys  
and its strong desire;

But the sower is gone—and the reaper—and the  
naked land is lone.

The seed-time joyful came, and the brown, moist  
clods were sweet

With the dews and the fruitful showers, the rains in  
their season fell,

And the song of the *cholam* harvest rang forth in the  
village street,

When the grain was heaped at the threshing, and the  
women toiled by the well.

And no man wanted for bread—yea, no man hungered  
to die;

The bare, rough feet above me sprang light o'er my  
trodden ways,  
So that I—the soul of the Field—was glad—yea, even I,  
From the time of the first-drawn furrow to the peace  
of my gleaning days.

What knowest thou of the Harvest, thou that dwellest  
afar?

When the Harvest follows not Seed-time the infant  
Dawn is old.

Things that be otherwise kind are pitiless—moon and  
star

Mock me with radiance clear, and the sun, a million-  
fold

More pitiless still looks down from a sky that is burn-  
ing brass

On a land he hath turned to iron—a silent land and a  
lorn,

Where even the vile weed withers, and the star-lit  
Night, alas!

Is only a weary waiting for the haggard face of the  
Morn.

I am sick with a pent-up longing for the fleecy clouds  
and the moist,

For the chatter of birds above me, and the tramping  
hooves of the steer,

The song of the poor, rough ryot, bare-skinned and  
cheery-voiced,

And the full-grown grain wind-rustling are the sounds  
I fain would hear.

And so, while the plough is bartered, and the well-wheel idly stands,  
And the bones of the stricken cattle gleam white in  
the nullah bed,  
I—the Dust of the Earth—that laboureth not with  
hands,  
I yearn for the hands of labour, and the life of labour  
—dead!

Dust of the Earth! thou sayest: thou with thy infinite  
scorn  
Of all save that which thou provest—but Dust of the  
Earth art thou!  
Have I not nurtured the mother, and the helpless babe  
new-born?  
And the peasant folk have loved me, as they weep for  
me—even now!  
The secret of life lay within me, my life in the life of the  
grain  
Communed with the heart of Nature when the seasons  
ripened my yield,  
Yea—I am Dust of the Earth, and my food is the air  
and the rain,  
And thou art dust of the Earth, and thy food is the  
harvest field!

## The Dead Ryot

Dead in the very field his fathers owned,  
Across the footpath leading through the grain,  
Anear the little tank all roughly stoned  
And bunched for the precious drops of rain,  
Dead lay the ryot! What a sovereign word  
Wherewith to feed gaunt hunger! Poor, starved hind,  
Never again shall thy sad cry be heard,  
Never again shall seasons prove unkind!

'Neath the hard sod th' unripened harvests lie—  
Not for *thy* reaping, thou that in the sun  
Art harvested of Death, beneath the sky  
In lonely nakedness and rags as one  
Forgotten of man and God. Yet, even so,  
Thou wast a human soul, whose children ran  
Perchance to meet thee when the sun was low,  
And loved thee as a father and a man.

Thou lying here beyond all sigh or prayer  
Art eloquent in silence, even as Death—  
God's great ambassador, whose accents bear  
Th' Eternal's summons for our mortal breath—  
Speaks louder than does Life, if we incline  
Our ears to hear. The peace for which we crave  
Cometh in slumber or that sleep divine  
Which hath its dreaming only in the grave.

Those withered arms were sinewy once to urge  
The straining kine across the furrowed field,  
Firm was thy foot upon the well's sheer verge,  
And hard thy toil to gather in the yield  
When the tall grain was ripe. Those parted lips  
Have trolled a song to labour, and those eyes,  
Staring at light yet dark in death's eclipse,  
Have mirrored in their depths the earth and skies.

Poor are the rights of sepulture, and weak  
The tear that wells for fellow stricken down  
With festering famine in his hollow cheek,  
While Riot yet may live and garlands crown  
The board of Luxury not far away,  
The libertine's excess—the marriage feast—  
The high-flown insolence of mortal day,  
The stalled contentment of the pampered beast.

Dead—and at rest! O mystery profound!  
At rest—at peace? The questioning soul must pause  
Baffled!—and yet Eternity around  
Immeasurable lies, and Reason awes  
Mocking conception. Nothing glides away  
Save to another change—another birth—  
As Night's last ling'ring star but fades when Day  
Reborn rejoicing leaps upon the Earth!

## The Pariah

Nude in his rags, and filthy as the swine  
Whose snouts are buried in the garbage near,  
He squats, the sun down-beating on his chine,  
And gazes soulless through the morning clear,  
Save that within his eyne an abject spark  
Of animal distrust burns sullen, low,  
And, flickering fitful through his glances dark,  
Bears witness to unutterable woe!

Fresh from the Night, as though in festal scorn,  
The earth, the air, and circumambient sky,  
Pranked in the vesture of the virgin morn,  
Mock him beyond despair. The green fields lie  
In waves around him, and a gracious calm  
Falls from the paling stars; the yet cool breeze,  
A viewless spirit, stirs the neighb'ring palm  
And fills the woodland with its harmonies.

Speak they to him, or speaking may his soul  
Divine and answer with responsive thrill?  
Nay, centuries have swept him to the goal  
Where silence broods above him, deathly still  
And man, his fellow with oppression's rod,  
Hath bowed him to the dust, till voiceless all  
His very heart is speechless as the sod  
Which holds him in its unrelenting thrall.

Thrall born of greed, of hate, of senseless spite,  
    Of Truth perverted and of Custom strong,  
Of ruthless craft of sacerdotal might  
    And basest worship of eternal wrong.  
The infamy of class—the pride of birth,  
    Of shameless lies sown broadcast through the years,  
These be the chains that bind him to the earth  
    In toils too fixed for curses or for tears.

Such Fate's decree. No germ of hope may spring  
    From them who mock his hunger and his thirst,  
Who spit upon him as an unclean thing,  
    Holding his touch a leprosy accurst.  
His very shade desilement! helot, slave,  
    Outcast—corrupt—pollute in blood and breath,  
His brightest gleam of Destiny the grave,  
    Life's sweetest boon the brotherhood of Death.

Hymns of the Earth, the song of West and East,  
    The shouting age's full triumphant roar,  
Leave him, at best, still lower than the beast,  
    And so to be for aye and evermore.  
For aye? Not so—in orbit vast, sublime  
    Eternal Justice fades from mortal ken,  
Yet sweeps resistless till the ordered Time  
    Shall mock the pride and prophecies of men.

His every hope within the Future lies,  
    As fruits and flowers in the buried seed  
'Neath frost of winter, hid from human eyes,  
    Hold Spring's fair resurrection. Freedom's creed

Must sway all nations with her touch divine,  
If Truth eternal shall itself be free  
And Earth our common Mother is to shine  
A planet pure among the worlds that be.

Outcast no more—but one within the fold  
Of broad humanity, his glance shall greet,  
Without a thought of all the ills of old,  
His fellow in the straggling village street.  
And mutual hopes and mutual rights shall blend  
For him their strength—their dignity—their worth  
In human names of brother—equal—friend,  
Among the myriad voices of the Earth!

## The Lucknow Garrison

*Donec mors nos separaverit.*

Still stand thy ruins 'neath the Indian sky,  
Memorials eloquent of blood and tears.  
Oh, for the spirit of those days gone by  
To wake a strain amid these later years  
Worthy of thee and thine! I seem to see,  
When thinking on thy consecrated dead,  
From thy scarred chambers start  
The heroes whom thy fiery travail bred  
And made thee--for us English--what thou art.

Green grows the grass around thy crumbling walls,  
Where glorious Lawrence groaned his life away;  
And Childhood's footsteps echo through those halls  
Wherein thy wounded and thy dying lay.  
While blent with infant laughter seems to rise  
The far-off murmur of thy battle roll,  
The prayer—the shout—the groan—  
Outram's unselfish chivalry of soul,  
And white-haired Havelock's strong, commanding tone.

Yet, what are names? The genius of the spot,  
Born of our womanhood and manhood brave  
Shall fire our children's children. Ne'er forgot  
Shall be the dust of thy historic grave

While Reverence fills the sense with musing calm,  
While Glory stirs the pulse of prince or clown,  
While blooms on British sod  
The glorious flower of our fair renown,  
Our English valour and our trust in God!

The memory of the living! Lo, they stand  
Engirt with honour while the day draws in,  
An ever-lessening and fraternal band  
Linked chivalrous in glory and akin  
To earth's immortals! Time may bow the frame  
And plough deep wrinkles 'mid their honoured scars,  
But Death—like Night which brings  
To Earth the blaze majestic of the stars,  
Shall but enhance their glory with his wings!

The memory of the Dead! A pilgrim, I  
Have bowed my face before thy honoured shrine,  
With pride deep-welling while the moments by  
Sped to a human ecstasy divine  
Tingling my very blood, to think that they,  
Martyrs and victors in our English need,  
Were children of the Earth—  
Yet better—heroes of our island breed  
And men and women of our British birth!

# Alone

## A Hill-top Reverie

*What hast thou stolen, O Death?*  
*The treasures of Life and Love,*  
*The laughter and music of breath*  
*Around and above :*  
*The flowers, the scent, and the song,*  
*The glories of Earth and Sea,*  
*Which only to Life can belong*  
*And never to Thee.*

*What hast thou given me, Time?*  
*Stars of the twilight gray,*  
*White tresses and Winter's rime,*  
*The close of the day.*  
*Lo! but the Spirit of Spring*  
*Is over the Valley and wold,*  
*The birds are beginning to sing,*  
*I only am old!*

Oh! white and shining are the snows, and kind the  
morning's sheen,  
And fresh each wilding flower that blows upon the hill-  
side green;  
From where I stand, before my gaze the station lies as  
still  
As if the houses were but toys all scattered o'er the  
hill

I watch the hawk on spacious wing go sailing grandly by,  
Above the Garden of the Dead where all my treasures lie,  
The hands I pressed, the lips I kissed, the hearts I loved below  
When first I breathed the mountain air long years and years ago.

Oh, Life! what charms and joys were thine! How sweet it was to hold  
Amid those dawns the rose of Love and watch the buds unfold!  
When Hope was like a draught divine that set the heart aglow,  
Through sunlit morns and starlit eves long years and years ago!

I hear again my husband's voice, my bridal vow renew,  
For Death to-day gives back to me the brave, the kind, the true;  
Oh, tender Death! oh, fleeting Time! how little did we know,  
When he and I first climbed the hill, long years and years ago!

I clasp again the girlie's hand I hoped would fondle mine  
When through Life's fading twilight dim the stars of heaven should shine;  
I hear the patter of her feet, and chide her even so,  
As when she romped upon the hill long years and years ago.

And there's my son, my little son, whose prattling  
accents ring

As fresh as if those golden years had never taken wing;  
How sweet it was his life to plan, and watch his future  
grow,

When first the changeless hills I saw, long years and  
years ago!

I sometimes wander by their graves, and wonder when  
the call

Will come for me to go their way, and join my trea-  
sures all;

Or if there's any truth in love—or creed—or faith—or  
God,

Or if the only Heaven I knew lies there--beneath the  
sod.

For white's my hair, and bent my form, and sore my  
heart and weak,

And often when I watch the hills I feel too full to  
speak;

I seem a part of cloud and storm, of sunlight, mist, and  
snow,

And then my eyes grow dim with tears for years and  
years ago.

## At the Depot

Oh, War is good an' War is great!  
So folks are sayin' proud an' glad;  
But now the Reg'ment's comin' back  
The patch'ry talk near drives me mad.  
The men as writes the papers tells  
How this one fought an' that one led,  
As though they'd like to make believe  
Their printer's ink'd raise the dead.

They cannot raise the dead that's gone,  
And all their talk 'n brag 'n cheers  
Won't bring me back the man I've lost  
And loved for nigh on twenty years.  
I see him plain as plain can be,  
But only in my heart;—and then  
I brush the gathering tears away  
And get me to my work agen!

A soldier's wife's no lady grand,  
But human hearts, I'm certain sure,  
Are just the same for high an' low,  
An' like as like for rich 'n poor.  
We're equal there; an' p'raps, who knows,  
It's just God's way to make us see  
How all the world is kith an' kin,  
Or shall be in the days to be.

They tell me that he saved a life—  
It may be so—for he was brave.  
But oh! he didn't save the life  
That sleeps so soundly in the grave.  
An' that to me was all the world,  
I cannot tell you how or why,  
Except that I was his true wife  
An' never thought that he would die.

A woman's foolish trust, maybe,  
We're foolish where our hearts are set,  
And love's not washed away wi' tears,  
Nor comes so easy to forget.  
And Glory, when it's bought cash down  
And paid for, too, with human lives,  
Is, trust me, but a worthless boon  
To weeping bairns and widowed wives.

I cannot watch the troops come home,  
With tramp an' drum an' music fine,  
For sure, I think my heart would break  
The whiles I looked along the line,  
And saw the glance and heard the voice  
Of this one blithe and that one gay,  
But not for me the voice of him  
Who marched away— who marched away!

## A Rime of the Nations

*When first the world was started men were frankly open-hearted,  
With land enough for everyone and something left to spare:  
Said Abram to his brother: "Go you this way or the other,  
I've not the least objection, make your choice and take your  
share".  
But now delimitations are a joy among the nations,  
And a scientific frontier is the pledge by which we stand,  
Though the object of the tussle is to bully—trick—or hustle  
Our dear beloved brother ever backward from his land.*

—THE ART OF DEMARCTION.

This is the Law of the Borderland, and the Hinterland  
and the Sea,  
That thou, my brother, mayst take and hold whatever  
thou canst from me:  
And I, thy brother of like belief, who love this Gospel  
true,  
May send my ships to thy littoral and do the same by  
you!  
It may be done by force of arms when men march out  
to die,  
Or it may be done by a Treaty fair writ plain as a  
Treaty lie:  
But take the Land, and hold the Land, and grab for  
the glebe and sod,  
This is the Law of the Earth and Sea, and the Law of  
the living God!

So whether the Russ shall creep and crawl where the  
Kuriles eastward be,  
Or whether his soul may seek its goal at the mouth of  
the Euxine Sea,  
Or whether he drive his ships afar in the rime of the  
Arctic spray,  
Till their noses rip up the ice floes' grip round the capes  
of Norway—  
Or whether he clash with the Tartar hordes that harry  
the bleak Pamir,  
He helpeth along the breed of the strong—and that is  
the Gospel here!  
He helpeth along, and so do we—we bide for our time  
and chance,  
Be we of the band of the Fatherland—or come we out  
of France,  
Or hie we forth from the little isles whose sons are ever  
bound  
Where Earth may yield them a battlefield—or the fight  
a burying-ground!  
Or be we sons of the grave Mynheers or seed of ancient  
Rome,  
Good faith! 't is some other man's land we want to save  
our souls at home!  
'T is true there's an ancient and feeble tale that prates  
of earthly peace,  
When the wolf shall dwell with the yeanling mild, and  
the trade of war shall cease,  
When the spear and the sword of the valiant man—so  
it runs in the Holy Book—  
Shall be hammered away to a plowshare meek and the  
shape of a pruning-hook.

But this is a legend of early sires who spake to trusting sons

Ere yet dreamed Earth of the saving grace that hallows her Maxim guns,

Or men went down to the sea in ships smooth-ribbed from deck to keel,

To keep the Law o' the Nations pure in the human Commonweal.

It stayed not man in his wrath or greed, or the flush of his victor pride,

It never yet brake in twain the sword or made the bolt go wide,

Nor lessened the weight of a battering-ram—nor lowered the hurtling spear,

Nor melted a phalanx, nor troubled the soul of a shouting charioteer.

And the world to-day is the same old world, with the same strong lust to win,

With a diplomat—and a protocol—and a Maxim gun chucked in.

So let it be sung, and let it be writ with sword and gun and pen,

Long live the Law o' the Borderland among the sons of men!

Long live the right of the seas and shores, whatever the Preacher saith,

To give us Land for the sake of Life—and Life by the sweets of Death!

That whether we rise or whether we fall, or whether we sink or swim,

We add our might to the Law of Right in the swell of the battle hymn;

That the strong may live and the weak may die, and  
the proof be published plain  
How the words in the Book are a foolish thing—a  
foolish thing and vain.  
For this is the Law of the Hinterland, the Borderland  
and the Sea,  
The Law of the Briton—the Law of the Russ—and the  
Law of the Japanee,  
The Law of the Boer—the Law of the Gaul, and the  
Law of the Teuton, too—  
The Land is Land for the strongest hand that can lead  
its legions through,  
The Law that is Law to a Border thief, to Kaiser—  
Queen—or King—  
The Law of the Right of a well-fought fight—and the  
Law of no other thing.  
And this is the Faith of kirk and creed, most dearly  
held and priced  
Above the tale of a Bethlehem—or the blood of a  
Jewish Christ;  
Above all dreams of a God on high—or a Devil down  
below—  
The meed of a saintly Paradise—or the Hell of eternal  
woe—  
For beyond all things that be thought—or said—or  
done—shall ever stand  
The creed that hallows my feet, 'fore God, when I tread  
on my neighbour's land!

## The Storm

“Lo!” cried the Thunder, pealing long and loud,  
As flamed the lightning-falchion from the cloud;  
“Without my salvoes nothing were the storm.  
I speak—and swift the listening Earth is cowed.”

“Thou braggart, thou!” the Lightning keen replied;  
“I leap to earth with ruin! Far and wide  
The lusty oaks, the rocks before me fall  
Riven and shattered, blasted in their pride!

“Behold, I strike! the huddling kine lie dead:  
One glance, and lo! the soul of man is fled!  
Thou boastest power—thou—whom Echo mocks  
With tossing sighs and murmurs valley-bred!”

“Hold!” cried the wind: “ye wranglers, I the soul,  
The mighty breath and spirit of the whole;  
Without the beating of my awful wings,  
Little the flame, and less, methinks, the roll.”

“Creation bows before me. At my wrath  
The tossing forest howls: my wreck-strewn path  
Is trophy-piled with grain and fruit and tree—  
Ye boast of strength: behold my aftermath!”

"Have peace, ye pygmies!" quoth the sheeted Rain:  
"Swoln is the spate, and snapped the bridge in twain;  
The roaring flood speeds on with swirling spume  
As flings the river high his crested mane."

"My strength is in his heart. A million rills  
Fed with my waters tumble from the hills;  
My dripping largess covers all the plains  
And all the valleys with rejoicing fills."

Thus as they spoke the Spirit of the Storm  
Folded his wings and fled. No earthly form  
Of Tempest then might hold him, and the sun  
Brake from the rifted blue, benignant-warm!

And nought was heard but waters all around  
Falling joyful: trills and notes of sound,  
Moist leaves that shook their veined runnels dry  
With rain of silver laughter to the ground.

The flowers breathed delight from petals moist  
And bells made dewy cool. The Earth rejoiced,  
Sending a sweet smell upwards to the sun,  
While clear the bulbul caroled liquid-voiced.

The cattle stood knee-deep in swollen mere,  
Plashing with slow delight. O'er ripples clear  
Skimmed a frail faery host on gauzy wing,  
Beating the bland and gracious atmosphere.

## To the Monsoon

I have not seen for many a vanished year  
    The yellow primrose peering at the Spring,  
Nor walked amid the fragrant atmosphere  
    When hawthorn pink and white  
        Fills Childhood with delight,  
And English hedgerows burst in blossoming.  
    Far off and dim slants Summer's lingering ray  
        That cheers the Autumn chill,  
Ere Winter frights the woodland song away  
    And bids the stream be still.  
But thou, oh! Spirit of the earth and sea,  
    Hast flung around my feet  
        The English spring-time sweet,  
And brought back Summer moods and Summer dreams  
    to me.

How like a soul articulate endowed  
    With speech harmonious and brooding thought  
Thou comest, heralded by cloud on cloud,  
    Thy couriers of the air  
        That gracious promise bear  
Of ripening harvests rich with plenty fraught!  
    The waves leap up at thee, the great deep swells  
        And thunderous falls the tide,

Rejoicing with an added strength that tells  
    Of thee, thou wonder wide!  
Proclaiming far, with myriad-noted mouth,  
    As though with conscious boast,  
        To foam-swept isle and coast,  
Thy march triumphant upwards from the South!

To thee the peasant looks with yearning eye,  
    The while, amid his labour bending low,  
He waits to see across the undimmed sky  
    Thy grey pavilion hung  
        The moon and stars among,  
Till quenched the sun's o'er-long despotic glow  
    In fructifying moisture. Lush and green  
        Bloom all the valleys wide  
With fruitage bountiful where toil hath been,  
    And even the bare hillside  
        In seasonable vesture freshly gleams,  
        Rejoicefully arrayed  
        In leaf and tender blade  
Amid thy mists and full descending streams!

And when thou gatherest up thy sovereign train  
    To bid the year farewell, and so depart,  
Oh! poverty of song, how all in vain,  
    Amid thy pageant fair,  
        Of earth and sea and air,  
The labouring line to paint thee as thou art,  
    In elemental pomp of gorgeous eyes  
        Whose glories overflow  
In spiritual converse sense conceives  
    But silence loves to know

In reverie unbroken—while the day,  
    Her shadowy pinions spread  
        And twilight round her head,  
Slips noiselessly among the stars—away!

# A Windy Day on the Hills

## Western Ghauts

The joy of a windy day  
Let loose o'er earth and sky  
When all the world's at play  
With a note of gladness high!  
When the blue is a deeper blue  
And the shadows glide and run,  
As ever the sun from the cloud peers through,  
Or the cloud sails over the sun.

As notes from an organ loft,  
The voice of bending trees  
Sweeps now with murmur soft,  
Now deep as rolling seas.  
And our thoughts go over the hills  
To the shingle, sand, and foam,  
As the shaping spirit of fancy fills  
With the surf-washed isles of home!

With battling pinions wide  
His plumèd soul to bear,  
Aloft to the breeze allied  
The strong kite beats the air;

While clear from a joyous throat,  
With many a trill and swell,  
The bulbul droppeth a liquid note  
O'er the nest he loveth well.

Anon there falleth a hush,  
A lull and a brooding calm,  
Like a pause before the rush  
Of a bridal song or psalm;  
Then sweeps from the slopes around  
The breath of a fuller strain,  
And earth to a measure of blending sound  
Is a dancing world again.

With language and speech intense,  
With beauty subtly wrought,  
Appealing to soul and sense,  
And woven in heart and thought:  
While the spirit in vain essays  
To utter with knowledge dim  
What the wind breathes forth in the rhythmic phrase  
Of a wordless Nature-hymn!

# Robert Burns

Died July 21st, 1796

(*A Centenary Poem.*)

Fresh are the festal flowers round his tomb,  
And tuned to triumph is the song now sung  
That being dead, yet, liveth he among  
Men's hearts for ever: not in tears and gloom,  
But clad with all beatitudes that be  
Within the soul of Nature, unto whom  
He knelt in ecstasy.  
And, strong to feel, her secret breathings heard  
Responsive as a child with keen emotion stirred

To song, now soft and tender as the croon  
Of mother o'er her babe, or moved to mirth  
Gave Humour broader scope and ampler girth  
Than souls less frank with Laughter's kindling boon  
Deemed hallowed by decorum. Thus he sped  
A merry jest to woo the blinking moon,  
Or Tam o' Shanter led  
A goblin chase, or held with sportive breath  
The fiend in converse droll, or mourned poor Mailie's  
death.

Or, kindling bright with patriotic fire,  
    Raised from the dust the Highland hearts again,  
The trampling hosts on Scotia's heather slain;  
    Till, even now, by magic of his lyre  
We see the pennons wave, the eyes ablaze,  
    And hear the clansmen's shout, in conflict dire  
        Through olden battle days,  
When North and South merged in opposing flood  
Unwitting fed the springs of Empire with their blood.

Or, laying bare his soul by passion swept,  
    He sang as man hath never sung before  
Or since—the heart's profoundest, sweetest lore  
    With pathos unapproachable, and wept  
His human agony in words that spring  
    Incomparably simple, sweet, adept  
        In mortal suffering:  
In mortal joy—in mortal folly—all  
That thrilled him through and through and bound him  
    in its thrall.

A child of Earth, yet, even as he trod  
    Through lowly poverty, misled—distraught,  
An honest independence robed his thought  
    In manliness superb; and nigh to God,  
And close to Heaven he walked with vision keen  
    That saw revealed within the daisied sod  
        Or in the woodland green,  
In dimpling burn, by mountain, heath or glen,  
Sympathies infinite, full of blessedness for men.

A soul fraternal, lightning-eyed to know  
The thing ignoble—swift to hurl the dart  
Winged with sarcastic laughter. Yet with heart  
Whence welled forth Pity for all life below  
Stricken or suffering, weak, poor, sad, despised,  
Forgiving much in gracious overflow  
Not because wrong he prized,  
But rather that, with vision keen, he knew  
How erring are the best—how incorrupt the few.

Poor as he died in wealth, or lands, or gear,  
The whole world lies his debtor. He hath bound  
The Earth with thoughts melodious, and the sound  
Of his rapt singing echoes far and near,  
In city or in shire, o'er seas full borne  
Freshly delightful, rapturously clear  
As wild bird's note at Morn.  
Intelligibly strong to bid arise  
Mirth—or the deeper thoughts that dim with tears the  
eyes.

Never his fame shall die while man hath breath,  
Were Scotia whelmed beneath the hungry sea  
Yet would his bonnie Ayr for ever be!  
Never shall Highland Mary taste of death  
While the impassioned plaining of his song  
The pathos of their parting witnesseth,  
And all the myriad throng  
He made his own derive from him a part  
Of that immortal life which leapt within his heart!

Oh! mirthful, tender, passionate, human bard,  
Child of the dust, yet led by light divine,  
A hundred years of homage now are thine,  
Singer immortal, though on Earth ill-starred!  
And fain would I, with sympathetic beat,  
Amid thy country's festival regard  
Thy glorious spirit greet;  
Amid the voices worthier far may be  
To render song for song and love for love to thee!

## When the Moon is New

Pure maid of Heaven, crowned with beauty young,  
Child of each month, yet eld as earth may be,  
What spells be thine the twilight airs among  
To shape our fortunes as we gaze on thee,  
Dreaming our dreams of smooth felicity?  
Proudly thou growest in thy consort's smile  
Full-orbed, majestic, as the days pass on,  
Holding thy Court amid the stars the while  
Till all the glory of thy reign be gone,  
And like a cloistered nun in vigil stern  
Thou peerest pale at gladsome Morn's return.

Younger art thou than babe whose rosy lip  
Clings to its mother's breast, yet hast thou seen  
A thousand generations surging slip  
Adown the gulfs to Death! whilst thou serene  
Hath waxed and waned above the conflict keen.  
Above the tears and laughter of the Earth,  
And all that Time, Life, Destiny may bring:  
Love's passion, marriage bells, triumphant birth,  
Fair Summer's lustiness, the buds of spring,  
Ripe Autumn's harvesting, and all the care  
That follows biting Winter from his lair.

Men worshipped thee of old, and even still  
    The village maid upon thee turns her eye  
The while thy crescent o'er the Western hill  
    Sweeps as a sickle in the evening sky  
The first-fruits of the stars; then breathes her sigh  
    For sweetheart or for friend remote or near,  
For some young dream half-shapen in her breast,  
    Perchance for prudent hope of worldly gear,  
Yet ever still, whatever seemeth best,  
    As prettily with glance uplift she stands  
And trustful turns the silver in her hands.

Mirrored in thee, may century-racked time  
    His image view, as in each other sphere  
Which crowneth Night with loveliness sublime  
    Or melteth in the blue when Day is near.  
Yet 'mongst them all, fair Moon, hast thou no peer  
    Whose unwrit melody the heart may teach  
To overflow in delicate complain,  
    Giving the lover gift of tenderest speech  
Wild throbbing from the heart's divinest pain;  
    For ever since thy rule began above,  
Fair Queen of Night, hast thou been Queen of Love.

The fisher folk in thy curved arms see store  
    Of hard-won earnings from the sounding deep,  
Or wise in wisdom fed from weather lore  
    Discern the tempest ere they sink to sleep;  
Or haply on the strand their vigil keep,

Sending their prayers through all the night-tossed  
foam  
For dear ones billow-swept on angry sea,  
Till the rough surges bring the wanderers home  
To heartfelt joy, if ever joy may be.  
Or sorrow mourns the loved, the true, the brave  
Whose requiem is chanted by the wave.

Oh, type of Change! and yet what else is all,  
Save the Eternal God whose will Divine  
Holds everlasting even change in thrall,  
Moulding the faintest curve, the finest line  
With touch profound to fathomless design!  
So thou shalt fade when He shall bid thee cease,  
And all the poesy that in thee lies  
Shall be a song in that Eternal peace,  
Where Restfulness beyond the Soul's surmise.  
Deeper than Silence fraught with musings good,  
Shall wrap the mortal in his angelhood.

## The Beggar

Beggar of the East, I know  
Little of thy race or land;  
On thy forehead lies thy woe,  
Or within thy skinny hand  
Outstretched aye to gods and men  
'Neath the bounty of the skies.  
This is writ beyond our ken,  
Man but lives and dies

Thou, the fruit of boon or curse,  
Let our vaunted wisdom say,  
Blind amid the universe,  
So we ever grope our way.  
Beggars all—from birth to death,  
Beggars of a pauper line,  
Only breathing forth our breath  
As thou breathest thine.

Virtue's trappings proud we wear,  
Flaunting in the world's wide ways,  
Gathering all that Earth may bear  
Through the harvest of our days.  
Asking, ever asking, we  
Place within our wallets, so,  
Fragments of the things that be  
As we onward go.

Rent and soiled our garments old,  
Though we deem them rare and new;  
See, 'neath many a fluttering fold  
How the nakedness peeps through!  
Scraps our larder—rags our dress—  
Tattered ever thus we creep  
Onward through our Life's distress  
Towards the boon of sleep!

“Give us Love!” cries smiling Youth,  
“Love!” and lo! the gift is lust;  
Bright the bitter tears of ruth  
Fall in passion to the dust.  
“Give us pleasure!” yea we twine  
Garlands for our tresses fair,  
Yet the song above the wine  
Rings of brooding care.

“Give us Fame!” and Fame is ours,  
Dewy-sparkling, freshly-blown,  
What! be these our gathered flowers  
Sad with all their fragrance flown?  
“Give us Wealth!” We hold it fast,  
Till amid our wand'ring prayers  
Death with mocking bounty vast  
Flings it to our heirs.

Beggar of the East, I vow,  
Earnestly and nothing loth,  
Thou art I and I am thou,  
Only beggars—brothers—both!

Beggar-brother, by my soul,  
By my poverty and thine—  
Take a brother-beggar's dole  
In the name Divine!

## The Traders

I fear that any protest that I might make to the editor of the *Review of Reviews* against harsh estimates of the work of England in India would not greatly impress him. I read in the article on which you have invited my opinion that we English are fully capable of misrepresenting the results of our administration in India; that those who lie once will lie again; and that "a race which is capable of insolent and unabashed mendacity in one continent . . . is not likely to stick at anything in an attempt to indicate its supremacy in another continent".

I happen to belong to that race, and I suppose that the value of the testimony which you have invited from me will have to be discounted by that fact. Such as it is, however, I readily place it at your service.—*Mr. T. J. Bennett to Mr. W. T. Stead.*

### *The Merchants and the Factors and the long-forgotten Writers*

*Who sowed the seed of Empire in a rudely-surfaced sod;  
The race of trader-statesmen and the clan of trader-  
fighters*

*Who laid the lines of order by the grace and will of  
God!*

*The sons from these descended, with the peoples in their  
keeping,*

*The men who bear the burden of this heritage to-day,  
Each toiler in the noonday with his heart amid the  
reaping,*

*To these and those that watch them do I dedicate my  
lay.*

They came to a field-bred people, a people of tilth and grain,  
Did the Traders out o' the West, the Traders over the Sea;  
Nay—not to one but to many—divided again and again  
By custom and race and tradition, the bondman as well as the free;  
And what was the freedom but might? The freedom of outlaw and thief,  
The freedom to override law for greed, or ambition, or lust,  
Where the cattle-lifter might rise to the rank of a titled chief  
And the chief of a hundred chiefs grind the people down to the dust!

They came to a land oft smitten by the levin of blasting strife,  
Did the Traders out o' the West, the men from the Islands small;  
To a land where the last invader had taken his toll of life  
In the sacked and the ruined city, from battered wall to wall.  
Moslem, or French, or Mahratta, Tartar or Portuguese,  
What to the field-bred people were the boon of a ruler's name?  
The Traders out o' the Islands could harry no worse than these,  
If they ousted the elder fighters who were here before they came.

They came to a land whose peoples knew things more  
cruel than Death,  
Did the Traders out o' the West, our seamen and  
soldier Sires;  
To a land where the tyrant killed by a nod, or a glance,  
or breath,  
And the young wife went to the torture amid the *sati*  
fires;  
Where the sick were drowned in the rivers ere yet the  
life had died,  
And the child was flung to the *mugger*, or choked in the  
close-pressed earth,  
Where even the festival laughter of the teeming country  
side  
Was cursed by a bleeding victim to season its brutal mirth.

They came to a land where Justice was a chattel bought  
and sold,  
Did the Traders out o' the West, the fair-skinned race  
and strong,  
To a land where a lie was hallowed, if power, or place,  
or gold  
Were the prize of an easy blindness, or the meed of a  
dastard wrong.  
They and their children after came ever to plant and  
spend  
Their strength 'mid the field-bred people in exile and  
blood and tears;  
They toiled in the dim beginning, and the toil shall be to  
the end,  
Till the men of the northern Islands grow weak with the  
ageing years.

They crawled with a cheery patience in their old three-deckers high,

Did the Traders out o' the West, what valiant dust, ah me!

With their broad sails wide to the breezes, or reefed to a storm-swept sky,

And the spirit of England ever their strength by the land and sea.

Through the waste of the wide Atlantic and round by the Cape afar,

Till the dawns of the East fell round them and kissed their cheeks with flame,

To the shoals of the steamy Hooghly and the hills of Malabar,

And the surf-lashed Coromandel the Trader-Rulers came.

And out of the ancient chaos by the strength of a plastic sway

Did the Traders out o' the West, by body and brain and soul,

Press on through the strife-rent years to the dawn of a clearer day,

With a strengthening grip on their work and a broadening path to their goal;

While the field-bred people they ruled grew thick on the ordered land,

Toiling and grateful and silent, yet blessing the change they saw,

The boon of a lengthening Peace made sure by a valiant hand,

And a fearless Justice that stood clear-eyed on the side of Law.

So thus did the Island-Traders for the field-bred people  
they ruled,  
The Traders and Empire-Builders knowing to work and  
to wait,  
By wars and rebellions and triumphs, by errors and folly  
schooled,  
By ills that were less than little and trials oft more than  
great.  
By long, lean years of famine when the field-bred people  
died,  
By pestilence and by poverty, by poison of tongue and  
pen,  
By the spoken word that abused them and the printed  
word that lied  
Through a garble of facts and figures to make them less  
than men.

But to-day stand the Island-Traders with Ind for their  
treasured ward,  
Brave traders out o' the West from England over the  
sea;  
Ruling the people by Law and keeping the gate with  
the Sword,  
Not to enslave and embitter, but only to cherish and free.  
And what if a famine should sear with a pitiless torture  
the land,  
Can we order the times and the seasons? oh fool, with  
a lie for a rod,  
We can but labour and die, and weak is the work of  
our hand,  
But wonderful—passing our knowledge—the working of  
Nature and God!

## Howrah Bridge

Take Howrah Bridge for what it's worth,  
As something flung from bank to bank:  
It's no great wonder of the earth,  
And doesn't much with bridges rank;  
With Tay, or Forth, or them that know  
The Thames, the Seine, the Hudson's tide,  
Or Indus wild, erratic flow,  
Or Gunga's sacred torrent wide.

“A mere pontoon!” you scornful say,  
An ugly gangway at the best,  
That's sometimes closed for half the day  
To give the bullock carts a rest:  
To let the coolies sleep and chew,  
To block the business of a town,  
To squeeze a snorting tug-boat through  
And make a tideway up and down.

That's so: but think. If Job of yore,  
Not he of Uz, but he who built  
His first foundation on the shore  
That's mostly Hughli mud and silt—  
If he, I say, could draw his breath,  
And gaze again on Hughli's stream,  
He might believe that wondrous Death  
Had opened up a wondrous dream.

He'd rub his eyes, would honest Job,  
At reeking chimney, smoke-stack, mast,  
And might object that Trade should robe  
In grime his shanty of the past.  
But listening to the city's din,  
And watching how her thousands trod,  
He'd feel each nail he'd hammered in  
Had grown a rivet under God.

For Howrah Bridge is something more  
Than iron—wood—foundations—piers—  
It stands a sign from shore to shore  
Of wonders linking up the years:  
Of order—law, of teeming trade,  
Of blood and tears and stress and toil,  
And Freedom springing 'neath the shade  
Of Empire on a foreign soil.

## The Toast

“ I fill my glass; there’s no one nigh,  
No fool a maudlin cheer to raise,  
And join me in the social lie  
Of easy compliment and phrase.  
The stars are out, the day is spent,  
The moonlit jungle’s round me spread;  
And so I toast with grim content  
Mine enemy—who lieth dead!

“ I got my *dâk*: the waning light  
Just touched the distant hills with flame,  
And then I read in black and white  
His ever thrice-accursed name.  
My fingers tremble o’er the page,  
I feel a thousand memories start;  
No room—no need—for useless rage  
With Hell’s full comfort in my heart!

“ ‘ Regretted—deeply’: God! I laugh  
And wish the scribe who penned that line  
Were blessed in feeling only half  
The anguish in this breast of mine.  
He’d taste the luxury of woe,  
The joy that tingles nerve and brain,  
In feeling Death had claimed a foe  
To never part with him again.

“ My eyes in fancy pierce the sod  
That holds him traitor—dastard—vile;  
A shameless woman’s shameless god,  
With poison in his easy smile:  
Ah! friend you came amid my life,  
As true a friend as man might find;  
And so you robbed me of my wife  
And killed my faith in womankind!

“ I might have slain you: earned the rope,  
Or made my path to Death’s eclipse,  
When Love that held all faith and hope  
Became but wormwood to my lips.  
I might—I might—the taunt is true,  
Nor counted cost—nor shame—nor slur,  
But till she fell I little knew  
How all my life flowed out from her.

“ And so I didn’t. But the toast:  
I’m sorry I’ve no vintage rare  
In which to pledge the honoured ghost  
Who’s sitting in my only chair.  
Well, whisky’s good, and soda makes  
The bubbles ‘winking at the brim’.

• • • •  
But curse my silly hand, it shakes  
For love of her and hate of him!

“ Oh! friend as true as ever trailed  
The robe of friendship in the mire;  
Oh! friend as pure as ever failed  
To quell the lust of base desire.

Oh! friend whose honour shrank from debt,  
    Yet stooped to steal my best—and worst—  
If there 's a hell to hold you yet  
    May you among the damned be cursed!"

L'ENVOI.

You smile at this. You turn the page,  
    You shrug your shoulders; what 's the good  
Of railing in a cultured age  
    At things so simply understood?  
A Court of Law—a smooth decree,  
    The briefly spoken legal rule  
Is better than the hell you see  
    Within the bosom of the fool!

## In Bosomland

In Bosomland I saw a baby lie  
Peacefully pillow'd, hushed in slumber there,  
While gently croon'd a mother lullaby  
Above the dimpled, downy morsel fair.  
The parted lips—the little round cheek press'd  
Rosily pink and pure,  
A nestling spirit in the softest nest  
Of Bosomland secure.

And Bosomland was full of breathings mild,  
Imaginations fond—and deep—and true,  
Watching the peaceful slumber of her child  
Through happy tears—the love-light's holiest dew  
And lo! the sleeper wakened, smiling bright,  
Meeting the eyes above,  
The bending joy ineffable—the light  
Of trembling mother-love!

In Bosomland I saw a baby lie  
Pale as a lily, quiet as a stone,  
Whole soft and sad brake forth a bitter cry,  
The wailing anguish of a mother's moan.  
The little lips were parted, but no breath  
Its fluttering fragrance flung,  
Though Life's young sunset lingered bright in Death  
The clustering curls among!

And Bosomland was full of thoughts that leapt  
Drenched numb from Sorrow's unimagined springs;  
Fondling the clay, it unavailing wept  
As though poor Love might guard with battling wings  
The thing beyond its weeping. Ever so  
Death's shadows round us fall,  
Teaching us never what we yearn to know—  
The meaning of it all!

## Over the Khud

What went over the Khud?

A frightened steed,  
A shrieking woman pale with straining eye  
Wide staring down the gulf, ere came the thud  
That blotted out the sun and quenched the sky  
In everlasting gloom. The trickling blood  
Alone hath motion now with horrid speed  
Where horse and rider shapeless—moveless lie  
Amid the rocks, the grasses, and the weed!

What went over the Khud?

Two loves—the one  
All good believing, while the other knew  
How faith borne down before a searing flood  
Was foul and fair and mocking and untrue.  
Yet, bring your wreaths, and let the rose's bud  
Drop in her grave! *Her* tale, at least, is done,  
And he who called her wife shall never view  
Aught save the dream his youthful fancy spun!

## Forward!

Forward! To what? Lo! Reputation lies  
Somewhere amid the Passes. There's the itch  
For Glory. Man's but human, and he dies  
Amid the dreaming fancies that bewitch  
The spirit fine,  
Wrapt with the thunder loud—the distance dim,  
The lightning and the ecstasy divine  
Of tramping thousands to the battle hymn.

Forward! The cost? Perchance not even here  
The gravest error lies—though fierce the strain,  
Money is nothing if the path be clear  
To Empire's highest strength and truest gain.  
But is it so?  
The tribesman is no friend—suspicious—proud—  
And yet, methinks, 'twere better we should know  
Him even thus than by our cannon cowed.

Forward! To what? Well, cover up the bones;  
They once held Life's wild mystery! A thing  
This even was that thrilled to human tones  
And mortal ardours linkt with suffering.  
The winter snows  
Enshroud the clay—the gentle and the clod,  
And lo! the wind that through the valley blows  
Sports with the dust that once to battle trod!

Forward! Your Chief hath flung his wisdom forth  
Before a Simla coterie! They hold  
Such breath a blast oracular! The North  
Pressed in a nutshell, and the riddle told  
So plain and fair,  
That hill-top dames whose husbands camp afar  
May chant upon the piny mountain air  
The fine beatitudes of border war.

Forward! Go on: yea, thus and thus and thus,  
Until your outposts look with easy gaze  
Upon the looming legions of the Russ.

Then may be lit, perchance, a battle blaze  
From ward to ward  
Whose flame shall fill the world. The day not yet,  
Not yet—and never—if the eager sword  
Might hold the boon of slumber and—forget.

Forward? No: Backward—now: for weal or woe:  
Conquer you must. You will not conquer hate  
For many years to come; and if a foe  
Worthy your steel shall thunder at your gate,  
To-day's red wrath  
Shall count against you if the taste remain,  
And then shall come the bloody aftermath.  
Yet, God forbid! and God forbid again!

## The Story of the Roddam

Hazy dawned Ascension Day,  
(They had prayed that holy week!)  
When the *Roddam* made her way  
To St. Pierre in Martinique:  
I can hear her skipper speak,  
Dropping anchor in the Bay,  
Here an order—there a word—  
All the town before him spread,  
Little dreaming he was heard  
By the Dead!

Wide the mountain on the shore  
Sudden yawned! A rumbling boom  
Shook the air. With muffled roar  
Spake that flaming throat of doom,  
And a cloud of awful gloom  
Choked the city—closing o'er  
Terror-stricken, gasping breath;  
Liquid fire the dreadful pall  
Flung by universal Death  
Over all!

Stretching outward from the land  
'Cross the Bay the cloud spread wide,  
Moving like a giant hand  
Till it smote the *Roddam's* side:  
Over in that seething tide

Swift she heeled by hell-blasts fanned,  
While a dropping molten hail  
Clogged and seared her fore and aft,  
And a pestilential gale  
Swept the craft.

Just one moment—Freeman then,  
Body, brain and soul aglow,  
Gave the order to his men  
In the engine-room below:  
“Full speed, quickly, let her go!”  
Get her out of this—but when?  
When and how? “Full speed astern!”  
Through the suffocating heat,  
Though the very deck should burn  
'Neath his feet.

Boiled the foam around the screw;  
Slowly on the outward trail  
Turned the *Roddam*, steaming through  
Darkness—fury—burning hail—  
What if that stout heart should quail?  
None to help him! Dead his crew—  
Dead—or smit with Death's desire,  
Yet 'mid shriek and sob and groan  
He stood calm through that hell-fire  
All alone!

So the awful hours passed:  
Hours? Years! The skipper stood  
Grimly steering: smoke-stack, mast—  
Glowing iron—blazing wood  
Only braced his hardihood.

Captain—victor—to the last,  
Crippled—burned—disfigured he  
Brought the *Roddum* from the Bay,  
Steered her to the open sea  
And away!

Suffolk, by this dauntless son  
Worthy of our Viking breed,  
Didst thou own no other one,  
Rich art thou in man and deed!  
Honour him! Not his the need,  
For his honour hath outrun  
Guerdon thine to give. His name  
Hold an heirloom. Make it known  
That thy children in his fame  
Feel their own!

## The Children of the Sun

The ships are riding ready for the morrow,  
Great lotus-land! oh, land of mother woe!  
And our hearts are aching with the sorrow  
That clingeth round the children ere they go.  
Oh, ships! ye are eager for your sailing,  
Oh, waves! ye are leaping as in fun;  
But the English mother's heart is full of wailing  
For her children—her children of the Sun!

For bitter is the parting when it closes  
O'er the children we have borne in joy and pain.  
They are going to the bonnie English roses,  
To the freshness of the English summer rain;  
So take them, Mother England, from us—weeping—  
For purer, richer treasure have we none,  
And cherish ever safe within thy keeping  
Our children—our children of the Sun!

We follow them, in fancy, in their rambles,  
We see them at their lessons and their play,  
The echo of their voices in their gambols  
Comes floating o'er the seas from far away;  
We wander by their side the very meadows  
Where in Childhood we were wont to leap and run,  
Ere we little thought how deep would fall the shadows  
Round our children—our children of the Sun!

We pray for them with prayers that seem but blindly  
To grope among the ever-crowding years,  
And hope no voice may ever fall unkindly  
On the spring-time of their laughter and their tears.  
Their faces with the eventide come thronging;  
We kiss them when the weary day is done,  
While the Mother heart is bursting in its longing  
For her children—her children of the Sun!

But most of all we pray that Time's defilement  
May over them and us in pity pass,  
Leaving bright through all the sorrow of exilement  
Some freshness of the morning on the grass;  
Some sweetness of the early recollection,  
Some blessing for the battle fought and won,  
Some living spring of earliest affection  
With our children—our children of the Sun!

## From an English Belfry

High swing I in the old church tower.  
They that made me are dead lang syne.  
Dust the hands that bequeathed me power,  
Power of music and song divine.  
Festival song and a song for sorrow,  
Sanctified ever in smiles and tears,  
Love and the joys that Love may borrow,  
Time and the things that be born of years.

Passing sweet for the youth and maiden,  
Linked in life with a joyful breath,  
Passing sad for the weary laden,  
Sorrowing heart in the gloom of Death.  
Ring I quickly, or toll I slowly,  
Message have I in mine iron tongue  
Filled with the echoes of musings holy,  
Springing from hearts of the old and young

Dream I dreams of the glebe and tillage,  
Daffodil buds and the Summer's leaves,  
Life and love of the nestling village,  
Seed-time fresh or the drooping sheaves?  
Dreams that fly as the fleeting swallows,  
Passing hence when the year grows old,  
Dreams that follow as Winter follows  
Autumn's pride of her garnered gold?

Dreams? Ay, dreams as the moon down gazes,  
    Dreams, ay, dreams as the sunlight falls,  
Dreams that blend with the modest daisies,  
    Dreams that melt in the ivied walls.  
Dreams that float with the children's laughter  
    Merrily shrill on the evening air,  
Dreams that bring to my belfry rafter  
    Shadow and sunlight from everywhere.

Many the feet that near me wander,  
    Many the feet that from me stray,  
Over the valley and fields out yonder,  
    Over the hills and far away.  
Some come back to me blithe as ever,  
    Some come back to me old and bowed,  
Some come back to me—nay—oh never,  
    Never again to my welcome loud.

Sleep they far from the mighty Mother!  
    What know I of their storm or calm?  
Homeland love and a love none other,  
    This my burden of song and psalm.  
Harvest foison and revel jolly,  
    Easter-tide and its triumph strain,  
Christmas crowned with his shining holly,  
    Death and birth of the year again!

## After Good-bye

### A Twilight Reverie

"She's gone into the West."—*Hood*

The music of love awoke in my heart  
As I sat thinking of thee, alone;  
A melody seemed from the sky to start,  
The song was of thee—my love—my own!  
It swept with a sweetness I never have heard  
In the tenderest language of human kind,  
Fresher and purer than rapture of bird  
Or the harmony soft of the summer wind.  
The glories of heaven, of earth and sea,  
So sang the voice to my brooding heart,  
Would fade and die were it not for thee,  
For thy wonderful love was their better part.  
The sun and the moon and the stars divine  
From thee had borrowed a lovelier fire,  
The beauty of earth and of heaven was thine,  
My life—my love, and my heart's desire!

The fleecy cloud that the sunset fills  
With a beauty that only the eve can bring,  
The lingering light on the far-off hills,  
And the shadows that close to the valleys cling;

The spirits that sport 'mid the shimmering leaves,  
The flowers that bloom in my garden fair,  
The very squirrels that haunt the eaves,  
And the commonest things of earth and air—  
Were full of a delicate rhythm of sound,  
As though the world were a tide of song,  
Whose murmuring magic my life enwound,  
Whose waters wafted my soul along,  
Away from the shadows of Life and Death,  
To a peace that was still as a brooding dove,  
Where the travail that cometh with earthly breath  
Was hushed in the joy of a perfect love!

As a delicate breath of the balmy South,  
Thy whispering speech on my senses stole;  
Bright were thine eyes, and close thy mouth  
Fragrant with kisses—my life—my soul!  
But even then, as I strove to speak,  
For in mystic silence my lips were bound,  
The roses paled from thy curving cheek,  
And nought but the glamour of sleep I found.  
And, alone, I awoke with a heart of care  
That had cheated my brain to a vision of thee,  
While the stars peered forth through the twilight air  
And thy ship sped on to the West—ah me!

## Biddy an' Me

Over the Sewaliks, rattling through the Doon,  
Tonga ponies strainin'—went the wife an' me.  
Only seems like yesterday—the blazin' afternoon—  
Dusty road behind us,—far as eye could see,  
Biddy with our darlin' a-sleepin' on her knee!

Longing for Mussoorie, all our hopes was there,  
Blessings on Mussoorie when we saw it rise,  
Like a blissful haven in the purer air;  
Bright the tears was standin', standin' in our eyes,  
Me an' Biddy gazin'—a-gazin' at the skies!

Civil Surgeon's orders: take your boy away,  
Bring him back his roses up among the hills,  
Quick, an' if you 'd save him: guess we didn't stay  
Thinkin' of expenses—payin' doctors' bills—  
What 's the good o' doctors when God A'mighty wills?

Over the Sewaliks, rattling through the Doon,  
Tonga ponies strainin'—came the wife an' me;  
Bright the stars was shinin', soft the gentle moon  
Touched the earth with glory, far as eye could see;  
Biddy was a-weepin', a-weepin' bitterly!

Weepin' for our darlin' 'neath Mussoorie sod,  
Where the valleys onward wander to the snows,  
Weepin' with her motherhood 'gainst the will o' God,  
While for ever brighter, clear the dawning grows,  
Passionate and pitiful so the sorrow flows!

## Disillusion

Familiarity, for old residents in India, robes all the characteristics of native life in the grey vestments of commonplace, till they lose the appreciation of that which is worth attention in weariness concerning that which time and experience show to be romantic only on the surface.—*Civil and Military Gazette's Review of book by Mark Twain.*

*Oh Reviewer, oh Reviewer,  
Never penned thou sentence truer,  
Anglo-India tired and jaded  
Finds the Eastern splendour pall!  
Dawns have risen, sunsets faded,  
Visions fled beyond recall.  
We are older—years are fewer,  
Fashions new and ever newer.  
Oh Reviewer, oh Reviewer,  
Disillusion claims us all!*

Oh, give me back my *khitmutgur*  
So gravely debonair,  
Who like a legend of the East  
Once stood behind my chair!  
And give me back the mystic charm  
That round his language clung,  
Before I crammed vernaculars  
And learned his mother-tongue!

I used to gaze with reverent awe  
Upon his turban high;

It's almost ugly now, I think,  
And wonder, sometimes, why  
Inexorable time hath swept  
The old romance away,  
And nothing but a *khitmatgar*'s  
My *khitmatgar* to-day.

And give me back the barber grave  
Who shaved sedately on  
Through broken talk of station *gup*  
In times that now be gone.  
Such barbers now may walk the earth  
'T were idle to deny,  
And yet, methinks, they subtly change  
While slip the lustrums by.

The Babu of that olden time  
Still sticks to Babu's work,  
But lo! his thought is squeezed from Mill,  
From Spencer and from Burke.  
In many a turn of garbled talk,  
And many a cloudy phrase,  
He stumbles in our English speech  
Amid his Eastern ways,  
  
And dreams, methinks, of Party strife,  
When Time and Chance shall breed  
A mighty Witenagemot  
Of caste and race and creed.  
His aspirations may be just,  
But this I only know,  
I loved the Babu better far  
Of fifty years ago.

We British lay a railway down  
For God and British Raj,  
Where Buddhist hewed him out a shrine  
Or Moslem reared a Taj;  
We bring our Science of the West  
To hold a Plague at bay,  
And lash a Famine till it shrinks  
A beaten hound away.

Though many faint and many fall,  
Not one shall turn aside,  
And he who toileth, toils the more  
Because his fellow died;  
Yet even so, the East to-day,  
For all our stress and cost,  
Hath taken much and yielded much,  
Yet something also lost.

The moonlight as a silver veil  
Still robes the hills and plains,  
The glory of the tropic stars  
As beautiful remains.  
The ancient rivers onward pass  
Through nations as they run,  
'Neath dawns, and noons, and golden eves  
Flung peerless from the sun.

The essence of unravelled Faith,  
From temple, grot, and shrine,  
Still struggles through a tangled maze  
Towards the Truth divine;

And yet, the glamour of the land,  
The thing so hard to tell,  
Hath lost, amid the press of life,  
The magic of its spell.

It may be, wandering 'mid the years  
With reverential tread,  
We find that life's best memories lie  
Among the lost and dead;  
For here a friend and there a friend  
Hath slipped into the past,  
And here a voice and there a face  
Was all too sweet to last!

And having drained life's laughter down,  
And shed our truest tears,  
We vainly ask To-day to yield  
The fruit of vanished years,  
When swift, and full, and keen and fresh,  
On lips and hearts and eyes  
The glory of existence smote,  
Ere knowledge made us—wise!

## The Young Czar's Rescript

Hath he seen my face in a vision, fairer than joys men  
love:

The onward sweep of a nation, the halo of steel and  
fire?

Hath he turned from the cry of the eagle to the cooing  
note of the dove?

Would he silence the war-drum's rattle with strain of  
the lute and lyre?

His eyes on the world's armed wonder,  
Its harvest of blood and tears,  
The tide of its swift ambitions,  
The haunting curse of its fears,  
Have gazed while the Morn is rising,  
Hard smitten with sense of pain,  
And his prayer is a mortal praying  
For the Golden Age again.

Why, this was the old way ever, far back in the ages  
dim,

Roman or Greek, Egyptian, the blood of father and  
son

Lay red on the fresh-bound laurel and flushed through  
the battle hymn

That welcomed the tramping legions when the well-  
fought fight was won.

And never hath woman listened  
With choking heart to the strife,  
And never hath woman welcomed  
Her dear ones back to life,  
But the prayer of the wife and mother  
Flung blind to the gods afar  
Hath been the prayer—and as fruitless—  
As this Rescript of the Czar.

I grant that the Maxim's teaching, or the iron virtue of  
Krupp,  
The faith in an armoured cruiser or the creed of rifled  
steel,  
The harvest of mailed suspicion ye have reaped and  
gathered up  
Is a merry jest for the Devil in a Christian Common-  
weal.

But what would ye have, my brothers?  
As the fruit so groweth the rind,  
And the oldest law of Creation  
Is that kind shall breed his kind.  
There is much ye must thresh and winnow,  
There is much ye must clean and comb,  
Ere the voice of a young Czar's Rescript  
Shall send your legions home.

For the thing is in blood—not in iron: in spirit and  
thought—not dust:  
The coiled and the welded cannon are forged in the  
shaping brain.

Cry "Peace" to the world to-morrow—let the sharpened blade go rust,

And say were the nations better if the sharpened greed remain?

So whether a Kaiser journey

To the Holy Tomb to pray,

Or whether the West be hungry

For the feast of Far Cathay,

It matters but little truly;

For is not the saying clear

That *after* the Armageddon

Comes the Peace of a thousand year?

## Brothers

### A Story of the Passes

*I have heard this tale when the jackal's wail  
Falls loud on the chilly night;  
Ere we sink down deep in the warmth of sleep,  
While the camp-fire blazes bright.  
It was Heera Singh, a man o' the Sikhs,  
First told me the story true;  
And now it is Heera Singh who speaks  
In the song I sing for you.*

“ ‘Now God be praised!’ was the cry we raised  
In the joy of our great salvation;  
Each man to the holy Name of his creed,  
In the tongue of his land and nation.  
The subaltern *sahib* he waved his sword  
In a hand that was grimed and gory,  
As he uttered the name of his own good Lord  
And cheered for his England’s glory.  
While the Havildar’s big fist gave his grizzled beard  
a twist,  
Ere he down on his knees descended,  
When out we stept—each—one—by—one,  
Three live men in the morning sun,  
From the post we had well defended.”

*“ Oh! I was a Sikh in Amritsar bred,  
 Amritsar, Sahib, where our temple stands,  
 Guru bucksho! and I bowed my head  
 Down to the dust in my bleeding hands!  
 There was Ali Khan from the Pindi side,  
 ‘ Allah il Allah!’ from his lips rang out,  
 While Hamilton Sahib half laughed and cried  
 To his god Hurrah with a mighty shout.”*

*“ We held a post ’gainst the tribesmen’s host  
 When the clans in the hills had risen,  
 With Death at our gate for a day and a night,  
 With his hand on our mountain prison;  
 Just a score of men with the heart to die,  
 If thus were our *kismet* written.  
 For we deemed no help in the hills was nigh,  
 So sore were we pressed and smitten,  
 With our dead around our feet—no pathway of re-  
 treat  
 And our last shot near expended,  
 When out we stept—each—one—by—one,  
 Three weak men in the morning sun,  
 From the post we had well defended.”*

*“ Oh! our heads went up and our heads went down,  
 All a-tremble with pride and joy.  
 I, a Sikh from Amritsar town,  
 Hamilton Sahib but a smooth-faced boy,  
 And Ali Khan, the Havildar grey,  
 Christian, Sikh, and Mussulman we.  
 Oh! it was sweeter than I can say  
 Out of a score to be saved—we three.”*

“ When the pale dawn broke, it was I who spoke  
     As we talked of a last grim sally;  
 ‘ Will the *Sahib* look forth where the purple spur  
     Slips down to the stony valley?  
 There’s a moving cloud that is never the mist’—  
     But he gazed on me stern and gravely,  
 Then he cried: ‘ Fore God! ’ as he gripped my wrist,  
     ‘ Ye ha’ spied a good sight bravely!’  
 And the three of us all, through a breach in the wall,  
     Peered down where the column wended,  
 Ere out we stept—each—one—by—one,  
     Three tired men in the morning sun,  
 From the post we had well defended.”

“ *And the cloud grew bigger—the little cloud—*  
     *Rifle and sword and the tramping feet;*  
*Then a shot awakened the echoes loud*  
     *Like a friend we had nevermore hoped to greet;*  
*While nearer the men of the column came,*  
     *And the flanking fire it swept true and far,*  
*With a kindlier light and a fairer flame*  
     *Than rising sun or the morning star.”*

“ So the tribesmen fled, and we carried our dead  
     To the silent hillside’s keeping.  
 Ah! theirs was the rest—but ours was the flood  
     Of the triumph and the pride and the weeping!  
 For we three knelt down on the mountain sod,  
     The tears from our eyes fast flowing,  
 As each gave thanks to his own good God  
     For the mercy past his knowing!

Then we stood too full to speak—for a moment dazed  
and weak,  
With the good fight fought and ended,  
While the cheers went up for us—every—one—  
Three saved men in the morning sun,  
By the post we had well defended!"

## Saransar

The little party was cut off. Night falls with great suddenness in the hills of Tirah, and owing to the formation of the country it is difficult to hear firing at the shortest distance. With no light to guide them, and no sounds to direct them to their brother comrades, the position of the little party was hopeless. They could but move on, hoping against hope, and when the end came, fight to the death. That this is what they did is in no manner of doubt. They sold their lives dearly, and surrounded by a pitiless foe they fought with undaunted courage to the end. When a force went out the next morning, the bodies of the boy officer and the whole of the party were found together. They bore testimony to the severity of the unequal struggle. Poor MacIntyre had two bullet wounds, one through the head and the other through the arm. Not a man of the little band but had one or more bullet wounds, many having been shot through the head. The bodies had been stripped, and many of them hacked about with swords; but feelings of relief possessed all when it was found that there had been no mutilation of the horrible character elsewhere practised by our frontier foe. It was a sad, heart-rending spectacle. Young MacIntyre had been only a short time in the regiment, but he was a favourite with everybody, while his coolness and determination gave promise of a valuable soldier.

That evening they were buried, wrapped in their blankets, in two long trenches, and the heights sounded the "Last Post" over the grave as their requiem. (Account of the Firing Party of the 48th at Saransar, from *The Tirah Campaign*, by H. Woosnam Mills.)

What are the bugles saying  
With a strain so long and so loud?  
They say that a soldier's blanket  
Is meet for a soldier's shroud.

They say that their hill-tossed music,  
 Blown forth of the living breath,  
 Is full of the victor's triumph  
 And sad with the wail of death.

Bugles of Talavera!

What are the bugles saying?  
 They tell of the falling night,  
 When a section of dog-tired English  
 Drew close for a rear-guard fight,  
 With an officer-boy to lead them,  
 A lost and an outflanked squad,  
 By the grace of a half-learned drill-book,  
 And a prayer to the unseen God.

Bugles of Talavera!

What are the bugles saying  
 Of the stand that was heel to heel?  
 The click of the quick-pressed lever,  
 The glint of the naked steel,  
 The flame of the steady volley,  
 The hope that was almost gone  
 As the leaping horde of the tribesmen  
 Swept on as a tide sweeps on.

Bugles of Talavera!

What are the bugles saying?  
 They say that the teeth are set,  
 They say that the breath comes thicker,  
 And the blood-red Night is wet;

While the rough, blunt speech of the English,  
The burr of the shires afar,  
Falls grim with a lone, brave pathos  
'Mid the hills of Saransar.

Bugles of Talavera!

What are the bugles saying?  
They say that English there  
Felt a breath from their island meadows  
Like incense fill the air.  
They say that they stood a moment  
With their dear ones by their side,  
For their spirits swept to the Homeland  
Before your English died.

Bugles of Talavera!

And aye are the bugles saying,  
While the dust lies low i' the dust,  
The strength of a strong man's fighting,  
The crown of the soldier's trust—  
The wine of a full-brimmed battle,  
The peace of the quiet grave,  
And a wreath from the hands of glory  
Are the guerdon of the brave.

Oh, Bugles of Talavera!

## The Bugle of Balaklava

The bugle on which the late Trumpet-Major Joy sounded the order for the Balaklava Charge was, with other Crimean relics, sold by auction by Messrs. Debenham in London, on the 30th ult., for 750 guineas.—*Daily Papers.*

Old bugle of Balaklava, once held in a strong man's  
grip,

In the chaos of hurtling battle thy voice had a note  
sublime.

The madness that woke thy spirit, the valour of life  
from the lip

Were gifts of the gods eternal flung free to the sons  
of Time.

And forth from the street the bidder now cometh with  
eager gaze

To fondle the silent trophy that blared forth Death in  
the Past,

While riseth the idle chatter that values the prize and—  
pays

As the hammer falls to an echo of that deathless  
bugle blast.

Well, stay for a moment, bidder, not to list to an oft-told tale,

But to humour the passing fancy of a minstrel's fleeting breath,

Yet—hark! through the auction hubbub comes the rush  
of that fiery hail,  
And the thunder of blood-splashed squadrons borne  
victory-crowned to Death!  
The echoing strain of the bugle life-clothed as a breath-  
ing soul,  
A note for the years unwritten, a voice for the land  
and sea,  
Wherever the drums of the English on the ears of the  
English roll,  
Wherever the lives of the English or the bones of the  
English be!

Thy legend is writ for ever for the eyes to come to read,  
And clear is thy clarion music for our sons unborn to  
know,  
While battle and faith in battle is the last and the  
highest creed,  
For the children of men to cherish in the lust of their  
strength below.  
Yet ever behind the battle is the way of the unknown  
God,  
The riddle of weal and weeping, the curse of an  
ancient ban,  
And the clouds of our brightest glory rise up from a  
blood-soaked sod,  
Where the proof of our stainless honour is the life  
of a fellow-man!

## Mainly Heroic

Come, Fame, and lift thy trumpet high,  
    Let Earth's four quarters echo loud  
With blast that shakes the bending sky  
    And awes the listless crowd!  
Our deeds that like the lightnings play  
    By flood and field, by sea and shore,  
Are harvests reaped by sires to-day  
    To feed our sons, for evermore.

We hear the Empire's dripping keels  
    Plunge on through weed and wave below,  
By thumping pistons, whirling wheels  
    We follow friend or foe.  
Our bearded skippers' ports are made  
    Where English grit and English gold  
Spread broad the roaring paths of trade,  
    And all the world is bought and sold.

Our grim twelve-pounders send their breath  
    O'er hill and desert, vale and plain,  
Our rifles sing their song of Death  
    Triumphant o'er the slain.  
Nor Night may fall, nor Dawn be past  
    Without our clear defiance hurled  
By triple cross and bugle blast  
    To all the peoples of the world.

Be ye of English speech and birth,  
Or man or woman, weak or strong,  
These echoes of the wind-wrapt Earth  
Proclaim your nation song:  
An anthem borne from myriad lips  
By starlit, sunlit seas and lands,  
From scattered camps and passing ships  
And world-embracing clasp of hands.

And yet, while round our temples press  
These laurels of our earth-strewn pride,  
Amid our serried mightiness  
And boast of Empire wide,  
Alas! for them that never know  
The ardours of our altar fires,  
Who watch the starry lives that glow  
While life for them in gloom expires!

The lips that might have learned to sing  
Their praises at an Empire's tread,  
Had not contumely snapped the string  
Whence melody is sped!  
The poor—the erring—sadly born,  
The unheroic we despise  
With lightnings of our ample scorn  
And blindness of averted eyes!

Our heroes all uncrowned with bays  
Who struggle onward, drear, alone,  
Amid a million misty ways  
With battles all their own.

Who faint and stumble, sink and fall  
While we stride shouting through the years,  
Condemning—if we think at all,  
The soul that trembles through its tears!

Yet—great again the flag breeze-blown  
By all the swooping winds that be,  
And strong the eagle-spirit grown,  
Brine-baptized of the sea;  
So strong that by its very sweep  
Of tireless Empire seems to come  
Across the world from deep to deep  
Some breath of God's millennium.

Is this the thought? Well, fling your boast:  
For nobler than the battle brand  
If every fort on every coast  
Were level with the strand;  
If not a single gun might speak  
Of conquest to the sons of men,  
That so, the wretched and the weak  
Might hail an "age of heroes" then!

A race of heroes? Yes: we are:  
And something less than heroes, too,  
Mere pygmies on a wandering star  
That spins amid the blue.  
Too prone, at all times, to discuss  
The Providence that speeds us on,  
As though the world were made for us  
And might be—empty—when we're gone!

## After Famous Victories

*Glory and Honour and medals and clasps  
Bravely I sing!  
Youth—and the strength of it,  
Life—and the length of it,  
Let the bells ring!  
Loud roll the salvoes high,  
Filling the Earth and Sky.  
Oh! that a man should die  
When the days bring  
None of their bravery,  
Only their knavery,  
Poverty—slavery:  
There lies the sting!*

You boast me the fame of your English race, you tell of  
their glories high;

Then hear, an ye will, how your heroes starve and die  
as a dog may die!

I sing not of them who in fight go down, struck low by  
the leaden rain,

Who are heaped in swaths on the bloody sward as a  
harvest field with grain,

But of those who return rejoicing home to the sound of  
fife and drum,

As victors decked with the palms and bays in the old  
time used to come.

Have you cheered them back to the Homeland fair?  
Have you felt it good to be

O'er sib to the breed of the English then in the march  
of their victory?

If ye have—and ye must—be ye born of them who have  
carried their strength away  
From sun to sun as a man may count from the West to  
the Eastern day,  
From sea to sea and from land to land, from pole to  
frozen pole,  
I fain ye would rede how your English breed bestoweth  
the Empire's dole.  
For sure it were well if the empty thing that ye call by  
Honour's name  
Were more than a selfish pride fanned up to a sheet of  
worthless flame,  
And well it were if the deed well done by the man of  
low estate  
Should tide him over the storm and stress that leaveth  
him desolate!  
There are those whom ye load with titles high to walk  
the world before;  
There are those whom ye brand with sorrow and shame,  
and ye know them—never more.  
When the days that be evil engird them round and their  
strength for toil departs,  
They may hide them then in their poverty and rot in  
your selfish marts.  
The Past is a Past forgotten by you: it is sung—it is  
writ and read,  
But the flesh and the blood that gave it birth cries out  
for a crust of bread!  
Yet this is the very Past itself—the grain by the Reaper  
spared—  
The hand you might clasp—the life you might bless—  
and would if ye truly cared.

But the song of the bard stirs high your blood to an  
unfraternal pride,  
While the worn-out clay that inspired the lay crawls—  
a beggar at your side!  
Or bentheth his steps to the Poor-house door, and so to  
his rest goes down  
The soul that has harried your foes lang syne to cringe  
at a beadle's frown!  
Ye cannot tell, and ye cannot know, ye have heard such  
things may be,  
But is it a sin an ye go not in to your brother's  
misery?  
Come, speak as ye may, nor stand as a fool on the road  
ye long ha' trod  
Between the lust of all earthly things and the love of  
man and God.  
Ye ha' done so much for your neighbour poor—so much  
for your neighbour's son,  
Yet tell me again and speak me plain if there be not  
more undone?  
Ye ha' done so much—ye ha' knelt in kirk, ye ha' swept  
and garnished well,  
Ye are told by your priest that, by grace released, your  
soul is safe from Hell;  
And what in God's name will it prosper the Faith or the  
reign of Love and Law  
If one beggar the less know the bitterness of a frowsy  
sty of straw?  
You say not that! Nay, the gift of speech were a boon  
to move to ruth  
The Father of Lies himself, methinks, if men always  
spake the truth!

But the Truth unsaid and the Right undone work out  
as the years go by  
To the shape of a weed in your garden fair and a self-  
convicted Lie!  
And this is where the Devil comes in to claim his tax  
and toll  
As the overlord of a national fraud and the keeper of  
your Soul!

## Nursing Sisters

To the Nurses of the Empire who have journeyed from  
the West

To the sickness of the Empire over seas,  
Where a City of the Empire's lying poisoned by the  
Pest,

Bewails her heavy sorrow to the breeze !

To the Nurses of the Empire who are strong amid our  
pain—

Who are fighting down the evil with the good,  
Through the curse of our defilement and the legions of  
the slain,  
With the ardour of a fearless womanhood !

They be few, this band of workers, in the harvest of the  
East,

Where a throbbing, moaning City gasps and dies ;  
Where the law of man sinks lower than the instinct of  
the beast,

And the gutter rots and festers to the skies.

They be few, but in the measure of their charity and  
truth

They are mightier than many otherwhere,  
By the courage and the gentleness, the purity and  
truth,  
And the healing of the sacrament they bear.

The Hope that lives with knowledge, the Truth that  
springs from Love,

The strength that probes the deepness of a need,  
Nor falters looking backward at the mountain tops  
above

The phantasies of sect—or race—or creed ;  
But takes the earth-born sorrow here, forever at our  
feet,

The misery inwoven with the sod,  
Where Life and Death together ever pass and ever  
meet,

Ever yearning, groping blindly up to God.

Do they rally thus, our Sisters, with the skill of school  
and ward,

To the Pestilence whose breathing is the grave?

Do they follow, mild and fearless, where the lightning  
of the sword

Sheds a glory round the anguish of the brave?

Sure, it matters little truly; they have laid them down  
a path

Through the evil that foregathers with the years,  
So that Mercy, like a shadow, follows ever on the  
wrath

That drenches Earth with blood and bitter tears.

And their guerdon? Ye may ask it of the slowly-ebbing  
breath,

Their unrecorded fare-thee-well renown;

For they earn their laurels meekly in the misty eves of  
death,

Where the sun is always sinking slowly down !

And the triumph of their toiling is the leaping joy of life—

The blessed hope that springs from vanished pain,  
When the brother and the sister and the husband and  
the wife  
In the sunlight of existence meet again.

The squadrons of the Empire slip from harbour, lock  
and voe

On the rocking, sobbing highway of the sea;  
The legions of the Empire turn for ever to a foe,  
For this we pluck our knowledge from the Tree:  
But the Red Cross pushes bravely where the blood of  
man is spilt,  
For a signal and a symbol and a sign,  
That through the lustng brotherhood of folly, shame,  
and guilt,  
Still runs a thread of Brotherhood divine!

## How We Pulled "B"

As related by Private Smith, the Cockney  
Batman of "F" Co.

Yus, "B" Troop was mos'ly teetotal,—their team A. T.  
A. for a quid,  
But bli'me, they slithered like switchbacks an' went all  
ter bits with a skid.  
It wasn't the lay o' the *maidan*; we pulled 'em all *pucker*  
'n square,  
Though their Capten was 'oarse with 'is 'eavin' an' the  
Colonel was tearin' 'is 'air.  
Wot for? Well, yer see, the ole Colonel was death on  
a peg or a pint;  
An' we bein' looked on as boozers, it clean put 'is nose  
outer jint!  
Not but wot they was good, too, was "B" troop. Their  
team-leader, "Posh" o' the Band,  
'Ad a foot like a bloomin' *marmooty* when 'e dug down  
'is 'eels in the sand.  
Their end man was Walker—ole "Ooky"—'ard as nails  
'n all muscle 'n bone,  
He could weigh down a section o' roosters an' then give  
the beggars a stone.  
They 'ad Green, with a 'ed like a football, an' about as  
much in it, I guess;  
'E was fat, too, was Green—fat as butter—with ten  
blessid years in the mess.

P'r'aps this was the pick o' *their* basket; but we 'ad  
some 'eavy weights too,  
An' we *meant* walkin' off wi' them pieces jest to show  
wot the boozers could do.  
We 'ad Jones—wot 'ad once bin a Pickford—'e could  
give Mr. "Ooky" a pound,  
There was Clarke with a shadder so 'eavy yer could 'ear  
it strike stones on the ground.  
There was Baker, wot's now a Reservist—a "doughy"  
'e was, too, by trade,  
Excused from all Gen'ral's Inspections 'cos 'e filled up  
the square on parade.  
There was red'-eded, pock-marked "Spud" Murphy,  
whose eyes 'as a bit of a twist,  
With a 'and—well, a fine leg o' mutton was a fool by  
the side of his fist.  
An' then there was me—I ain't 'eavy, but a rope's an  
ole chummy o' mine,  
Or it was when I worked on the coalers, 'fore I chucked  
up the sea for the line.  
An' so we got down taut 'n steady—we both pulled as  
though we'd a' died.  
An' we both scored a pint—which was *cushi*—an' then  
"B" swore they'd win—an' they lied.  
They lied, Sir!—We opened our greybacks—we tucked  
up our sleeves once agen,  
We laid on thet rope 'ell for leather, fer we knowed we  
was pullin' 'gainst men.  
I can see the rope stretch in the sunshine, I can see the  
tape over the chalk,  
I can see the ole Colonel a-grinnin' 'cos 'e thought "B"  
'ud win in a walk.

I can 'ear the word "Go!" an' I'm pullin'—just as though  
I was trying to save  
My soul from the grip o' the Devil—my flesh from the  
brink o' the grave.

I can see the team-leaders—I *couldn't*—but I *feel* 'em  
perspirin' an' red,  
Wi' the veins in their arms stiff 'n knotted, an' their  
eyes jumpin' outer their 'ead.

There ain't not a move—on'y pullin'—as though we was  
turned inter stone,

There ain't not a sound—on'y breathin'—with a grunt  
on the top of a groan.

An' so we stood strainin' and gaspin' jest as though we'd  
took root in the soil,  
With a shake in our legs like an ague, an' our hands  
gettin' slippy as oil,  
With the sweat droppin' off of our noses, an' a dingin'  
goin' clean through our ears,

They said we'd been pullin' five minnits—such minnits  
—they stretched inter years,

When out comes a "Heave!" from "B's" trainer; they  
'eaved, an' we budged fer an inch,  
An' then we stuck faster 'n ever with our teeth on the  
grind in a clinch.

Then "Heave!" cries ole "Brassy", "ye boozers," an'  
"Heave!" an' we felt that we must;  
We 'eaved with our shoulder-blades crackin' an' our  
wind-pipes jes' ready to bust.

Then "B" commenced wobblin' an' slippin', they  
tumbled, gasped, grunted an' slud,

While we turns our backs to the beggars an' lugs 'em  
like logs through the mud.

Pulley-hauley an' heave—pulley-hauley! arms locked 'n away with a swing,  
They was down on their backs 'n their stomachs like a dashed lot o' knots on a string.  
They was endways 'n sideways 'n backways, they cussed, but we walked—an' they came.  
It was worse than a jolt in a dooley—but it got 'em along all the same.  
I can see the boys yellin' or cheerin', the Colonel along o' the rest,  
For a man as was *pucker* as 'e was, why 'e just chuck's is vote for the best.  
An' 'e sez, with a grin to the Major, as he turns on 'is 'eels for a slope,  
*"If they do like a pull at the porter, by Gad! they can pull at a rope!"*  
That's a fact—an' we could—an' we did too, an' if you'd 'a bin there to see  
You'd 'a sed that we *worked* for them pieces—  
WHEN WE PULLED "B".

## By Word of Mouth

Our humble representation is, appoint one experienced and moderate Indian in that Council to represent the views of the people, and specially to represent the interests of the millions of cultivators and the industrial population who form the bulk of the people.—*Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt.*

I hailed a ryot in his *khet*—  
A *ryot*, you will understand,  
Is very likely to be met,  
If you perambulate the land:  
Indeed, you 'll find him ever thus,  
Dispersedly ubiquitous.

A *khet*? Forgive me, I express  
Myself in language hardly plain:  
A *khet*'s salvation, more or less,  
According to the fall of rain:  
A field, in fine, to wander through  
And cogitate on Revenue.

“I'm told,” quoth I, “my worthy friend”—  
Addressing thus the rustic stout,  
“You ryots simply have no end  
Of grievances to talk about.”  
All which with air oracular  
I said in bad vernacular.

“ I’m also told”—I made a pause—  
 By swift emotion overcome—  
 “ That though you’d like to frame the laws,  
 Politically you are dumb;  
 And, therefore, thus condemned to live,  
 You’d like a representative?

“ A man to speak—now tell me true,  
 Is this a fact, my toiling friend?  
 For many men would speak for you  
 And keep on speaking without end;  
 The difficulty in the way  
 Is what you’d like to have them say.”

The ryot turned a heavy eye,  
 And gave his loin-cloth just a twist;  
 “ *Hoozoor*,” he cried, and fetched a sigh,  
 “ I wish you’d tell ‘em to desist.”  
 He spoke in Hindustani thus,  
 A circumlocutory “ *bus* ”.

“ You see, we *ryots*, toiling folk,  
 Are peasant sons of peasant sires,  
 The plough,—the bullock—” thus he spoke—  
 “ The votive grain,—the altar fires,  
 The marriage feast—the sowcar’s bond—  
 We look for little else beyond.

“ The favour of the gods, *hoozoor*,  
 A son or twain our lives to cheer,  
 Heaped grain upon the threshing-floor,

And health of body through the year:  
 With these we're blest, and if they fail,  
 Will word of mortal man avail?

“The Sirkar cannot send the rains,  
 Although it hath to levy toll,  
 And barren fields and empty wains  
 Are bitter to the Sirkar's soul:  
 But what the Sirkar might do well,  
 Would be to change our old Patel.

“Again, *hoozoor*, we should not weep,  
 If in the *thana* by the wood,  
 Some other *thanadar* should keep  
 Our village population good.  
 They're very good—our people are—  
 But some dislike the *thanadar*.

“The Bunniahs, too, who buy our grain,  
 Wring out the labour of our lives—  
 Ah, yes! *hoozoor*, we do complain,  
 And talk about it to our wives:  
 A change of *bunniah*s you might try;  
 We change 'em—sometimes—when they die.

“Shall I essay to make a start  
 Politically born to bless;  
 Unravelling, with ready art,  
 The tangled skein of your distress?”  
 He looked as if he understood,  
 But shook his head and cried: “No good!

“ Patels are fat, *patels* are thin,  
    But mostly all *patel*, they say;  
And underneath the *bunniah's* skin  
    You 'll find more *bunniah* tucked away:  
While *thanadars* from near or far  
    Do much resemble *thanadar*.

“ The gods we worship in the East,  
    Because, it seems to me, we must,  
Are *Kismet*, Lord of man and beast,  
    And *Zulm* strong, and *Zubberdust*:  
While be the man a sage or fool  
    He bends the knee to Lord *Mamool*.

“ We've talked of these for ages past.  
    Vain talk! We 'll talk for ages still,  
While holds the Hindoo by his caste,  
    And custom petrifies the will.  
Vain talk! Protector of the Poor!  
    *Hoozoor, Salaam! Salaam, Hoozoor!*”

## An Unreported Convention

So, the men of the West assembled all, and their brows  
were knit and stern;

Quoth they: "While the Empire spreads apace our  
men from the Empire turn.

We ask for a scheme for a Nation's need—a simple and  
clean-cut plan

To fill up the ranks of our Corps at home, and bring us  
the fighting man;

The man with the thews and sinews strong, the man  
of the inches tall,

Whose chest may stick to a tunic stout, though it press  
to a rifle ball."

"And if there be any among ye here," spake the Chair-  
man thereupon,

"Who can settle the matter for good and all, by the  
grace o' God, say on!"

Then up jumped a Celtic delegate who hailed from  
County Clare:

"An faix! 'tis the Irish nation, bedad! are the bhoys  
fur the barrick square.

The bhoys fur the battle—for Glory or Death, from the  
North to Bantry Bay,

They'll fight an' they'll work like the Divvle himself for  
fun an' a fair day's pay;

But, savin' your Honour's prisence, yez see, they're cut  
an' they're docked galore  
Fur the bite that goes inter their stomachs, ochone! or  
the duds that come outer the store.  
Their hearts ut the sight av a Pay Sheet sinks clane  
inter their blessid boots,  
An' thut, by the great St. Pathrick's sowl, is the cause  
av your few recruits!"

"I'll speak nae mair o' the siller fair, though it gars  
me greet, nae doot,"  
Quo' a bonnie Scot o' the Highlands free, "an' I dinna  
ken to spoot;  
There be fauts in the Army ye ken fu' well, but ane o'  
the sairest trials  
Is the loon in the kilt an' tartan braw ye list frae the  
Seeven Dials.  
We ha' lairds an' the sons o' clansmen leal still left  
aboon the Tweed,  
Nor hold we less by the kirk an' state that we loe the  
Hielan' breed;  
We are braw, long-leggit, an leal an' dour, but proud  
of our kith an' clan,  
So give us our Hielan' Regiments back for the pipes o'  
the Hielan' Man!"

"Look 'ere," quoth a Cockney coster then; "I'm a  
bit of a rorty bloke,  
An' the hair o' *my* native mountains, gents, is the hair  
o' the good ole 'smoke'.  
Yer carn't make a Army a reel good show except for a  
bloomin' chump

So long as the tickets o' *your* Reserved means a seat in  
the gaol or lump.

I backs up the gents as 'ave spoke before, more oof an'  
a longer spell,

Fer the streets o' the smoke fer a time-ex swad are the  
streets of a little 'ell.

Yer forrin' countries is fine no doubt, an' wonderful  
sights ter see,

But a barrer o' greens in the Mile End Road an' a good  
ole Dutch does *me*."

Then a Lord of the Privy Council spake with a soft and  
cheerful smirk:

"Yea, great is the might of the Empire, friends, and  
great is the Empire's work.

We have gathered the wisdom of North and South to  
lead us out of the fog,

And a voice hath come from the heather, I trow, and  
one from the fresh peat bog,

And a vote from a Son of the Empire's heart; but we  
seek for some other plan

That's free from the glamour of sentiment when we  
deal with the soldier man.

This is true in the case of the Household Troops, and  
so would I fain opine

That it's twice as true, if I so may say, when ye deal  
with men o' the Line.

"There are Budgets to meet and a Sinking Fund, and  
a National Debt alway;

Ye may raise an' ye will the Income Tax, but never the  
soldier's pay.

There are men at the forge, and men at the mine, and  
men at the loom and docks,

Cut out for our boots and overalls and the fashion of  
Army frocks.

'Tis true they're not up to the standard *now*; but that  
were a matter small,

For 'tis easy to make a standard less, if ye can't make  
soldiers tall.

So this I propose to the Meeting here, and I trust we  
shall all agree,

That the height for the Line be cut down fine to a use-  
ful five foot three."

'T was put to the vote, and the thing was passed for the  
Empire, even so,

And duly became a sacred word in the page of a  
new G. O.

But the men from the shires, and the men from the  
towns, and men from the yard and mine,

And the men from the plough and the lathe and the  
loom came not to the "Thin Red Line",

Whose name was a charm in the days gone by—the  
phrase of a Nation's pride,

A Thin Red Line, and a Long Red Line, and a Strong  
Red Line beside;

But now—'t is a title the Land may hold as a jest and a  
bitter sport,

For the Line's not only a Thin Red Line, but a Line  
both *Thin* and SHORT.

## Soldiers of Ind

*Men of the Hills and men of the Plains, men of the Isles and Sea,  
Brothers in bond of battle and blood wherever the battle may be;  
A song and a thought for your fighting line, a song for the march  
and camp,  
A song to the beat of the rolling drums, a song to the measured  
tramp,  
When the feet lift up on the dusty road 'neath sun and moon and  
star,  
And the prayer is prayed by mother and maid for their best beloved  
afar.*

What say the Plains? The Plains that stretch along  
From hamlet and from field, from fold and byre.  
“Here once toiled one who sang his peasant song  
And now reaps harvest 'mid the tribesmen's fire.”  
The Spirit of a mightier world than springs  
From his poor native village led him on  
To Glory: “Yea—to Glory!” Ever sings  
The Spirit of the Plains when he is gone.

What say the Hills whence comes the Ghurkha breed—  
The bull-dogs of the East? From crest and vale  
Reverberate the echoes, swift they speed  
On falling waters or the mountain gale.  
“Our hillmen brave as lions have gone forth.  
They were our sons—we bred them—even we—  
To face thy foemen—Islands of the North—  
We know their worth and sing it thus to ye.”

What say the Passes? There the requiem  
     Of battle lingers o'er the undying dead—  
 “Our Soldiers of the Sun, whose diadem  
     Of Honour glitters in the nullah bed,  
 Or by the hillside drear, or dark ravine,  
     Or on the *sangared* steep—a solemn ray  
 That touches thus the thing that once hath been,  
     With Glory! Glory!”—So the Passes say!

And so the great world hears, and men's eyes blaze,  
     As each one to his neighbour cries “ Well done!”  
 A little thing this speech—this flower of praise,  
     Yet let it crown our Soldiers of the Sun.  
 Not here alone—for here we know them well,  
     But tell our English waiting on the shore  
 To welcome back *their* heroes: “ Lo! these fell  
     Even as ours—as brave—for evermore.”

I hear the roar amid the London street.  
     The earth hath not its equal whether it be  
 For ignorance or knowledge, and the feet  
     That press therein and eyes that turn to see  
 Know nothing of our sepoys—let them know  
     That here be men beneath whose dark skin runs  
 A battle-virtue kindred with the glow  
     That fires the leaping pulses of our sons.

'T is worth proclaiming. Yea, it seems to me  
     This loyalty—to Death—lies close akin  
 To all the noblest human traits that be,  
     Engendered whence we know not—yet within

Choice spirits nobly gathered. Lo! we stand,  
Needs must, against the world. Yet war's alarms  
Are nothing to our mightiest Motherland  
While Nation circles Nations in her Arms!

## Spain, 1898

Be these the ships that Montezuma scanned  
Three hundred years agone? Be these the men  
Whose feet stamped Empire on a new-found strand  
With conquering Cortez then?

Why, yes:—why not? Sons of their fathers dead  
And gloriously sainted—even so;  
Yet sons, methinks, who gaze where Day is fled  
Trailing her after-glow.

And, musing on thy past, I seem to see  
The grim barbarians of thy battle-fires,  
Who ruled when Rome's last Cæsars came to be  
Pale shadows of their sires.

From thy wild Goths sprang forth thy worst and best,  
Euric, Egica, old Toledo's laws;  
Thy first-fledged eaglets eyried in their nest,  
Strong-armed with beak and claws.

And though despite thy breed of nursing kings  
The Saracen engirt thee—gripped thee fast—  
Bore down the battling of thy valiant wings  
Into the dust at last,

Thy Cyd yet fights immortal. Still we read  
Asturia's valour, still that softer part  
Ximena's passion evermore shall plead  
Triumphant to the heart!

Then was thy Spring-time: after that waxed bright  
Those eyes that hungered wistfully and brave,  
Enchanted visions drew thy raptured sight  
Beyond the Western wave.

And all thy prows turned thither. Full thy sails  
Drove on thy keels to empire: so unfurled  
They bore thy Dons before the fickle gales  
To seize another world.

And yet, to-day, above all conquests made—  
The chink of broad doubloons—the battle din  
Of lance, or pike, or lithe Toledo blade  
Or shining culverin,

Or straining galleons of those courtly days  
When Ferdinand and Isabella heard  
The rounded accents of thy polished phrase  
Ring high through every word;

When thy Columbus billow-tossed—a god  
Creative spake, and men with open mouth  
Listened stock-still upon the magic sod  
Of Cadiz in the south:

Sweeter comes up the rippling, wholesome sound  
Of thy Cervantes' laughter. He who sent  
For every age the weary world around  
A breath of merriment.

Ah! could he hold within his hand to-day  
The sword, or haply, see thy valiant sons  
Weaving the robe of History—away  
Among the Western guns,

In clouds of wrath long-gathered—angered—brave,  
Sore to the marrow in their stricken pride,  
With all their Past appealing from the wave  
Whereon their victors ride,

To this dark Present—fruit of fruitless years,  
Lurid with blood, and cursed with maniac greed,  
Then were his laughter ringing through his tears  
A bitter note indeed.

The earnest blood would tinge the gallant cheek  
That flushed with valour in Colunna's train,  
Thy wisest son with all his heart would speak  
The truth to thee, O Spain!

Methinks, his speech would move thee, even to know  
The madness of thy tilting. Thou hast hurled  
Thy strength not only 'gainst an arm'd foe  
But 'gainst a younger world.

For thou art laggard on an ebbing tide,  
Not weeting that the yearnings of the free  
Have borne them onwards—outwards—to the wide  
Deep soundings of the sea!

## A Burmese Pipe

### An Old Smoker's Idyll

What twists and turns of Fortune's chain,  
    What journeyings erratic,  
Have brought thee to my hands again  
    Across the hot Carnatic?  
Thy velvet, amber, chain, and moon  
    Have seen the Irrawaddy,  
And know as much about Rangoon  
    As—any other body.

If thou couldst speak! Ah, wherefore not,  
    Thou gaudy tantalizer?  
Thy earthen bowl that gloweth hot  
    Perchance might make me wiser.  
That dash of travel in thy clay  
    Might paint Pagan's pagodas  
And ring the bells of Mandalay  
    Among my friends the Todas.

Yet wherefore should I ask for things  
    Beyond a pipe's possession,  
Or sigh for gift o' speech that brings  
    Too oft but false impression?  
Thou couldst not tell a franker tale,  
    More sweet in true affection,  
Than Memory when she lifts the veil  
    Of old-time recollection.

Love's old, old story fills my mind  
When I recall thy donor,  
Ye Fates, be good to her and kind,  
Rain down your blessings on her!  
I see her standing even now,  
Thy stem between her fingers,  
The sunlight glinting on her brow,  
And in the air there lingers

Her laughter low and soft and sweet,  
Her morning salutation,  
Dear voice, in which all sounds would meet  
In tuneful intonation.  
And as I see her brightness near,  
So plainly hear her calling,  
Then know I why thou art so dear,  
And why these tears are falling!

## A Ballad of Free Trade

Where be the great, the olden gods, we worshipped  
in the Past,

The faith which sprang from ties of blood and gripped  
affection fast?

The courage—hope—the tears, the trust, that moved  
our roving sires

And sent them to a hundred lands to light their altar  
fires?

We grew amid our battling seas, our mists and  
Northern rain,

And caught the *wanderlust*, maybe, from Viking and  
from Dane;

For when the Mother bare her own through travail  
grim and stern,

She saw full many a son fare forth to never more  
return.

They slipped from hamlet, burgh, and shire, exultant,  
joyous, free,

With wide horizons in their eyes and hungry for the  
sea,

While murmurs of the lands afar, of forest, stream, and  
floe,

Came lapping round the Kentish cliffs and down to  
Plymouth Hoe.

And one went forth to sail with Drake to raid the Spanish Main,  
And one fared forth with Frobisher to scourge the Dons again;  
Or *Golden Hind*, or brave *Revenge*, or blood, or storm, or stress,  
They sang with England's flag above, and shouted for Queen Bess!

Our tall three-deckers spread their sails far on past Cape and Horn,  
Till springing from the loins of Trade was brine-swept Empire born;  
To torrid Ind, to far Cathay, to isles remote and lone  
Your seamen-traders sped them on and made the lands their own!

Thus English speech of North and South went forth to all the world,  
And English blood oft dyed the sod, 'neath England's Flag unfurled,  
While Empire-like our native oak stretched down its roots afar;  
Till Children of the Southern Cross loved well the Northern Star!

But now we've lost the epic soul, that fine romance of youth  
That led our steps unfaltering on and spake to us for truth;

We wrangle in a fiscal strife of Blue Book overgrown,  
And deem the sordid tricks of trade will bind us to  
our own!

Our own! God wot to them we stand close bred, in-  
strained, o'er-sib,  
But they are growing day by day past leading-string  
and crib;  
And this one tills, and that one shears, and one shall  
toil and spin,  
So pass the olden gods away while step the new gods  
in.

We've flung the tideways of our ports wide open, free  
to all—  
The foreign liners know the way from Mersey to  
Blackwall;  
You'll find them with their cranes at work and hatches  
open wide,  
With every lumper on the job to clean 'em out in-  
side!

The Burma rice-field's wet for you, the New World  
farmer's grain  
Is coming fifty wagons long to feed you in Mark  
Lane,  
And somewhere, some one—black or white—who  
doesn't know or care,  
Is putting in his overtime for Houndsditch or May-  
fair!

Is this a loss—this toil you buy—this labour widely spread,

That makes the world your harvest-field and stands to you for bread?

The myriad brain, the myriad hand, that sink to no repose,

Are these because they work for you, your masters and your foes?

Know this: the olden gods were great in gifts we still may hold,

The pride of race, the creed of home, we measured not in gold;

The sacred, far-flung bond of kin, which through the ages runs,

And links the Mother of the North to all her wayward sons!

When these shall weaker grow by greed, or fear, or cold distrust,

Then may we write our empire-tale of world-wide *wanderlust*;

Not in the joyous hope of Drake or ventures of our sires,

But deep amid the ashes grey that once were living fires!





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